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THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
WORKER
HIS LIFE AND WORK

L. F. SENSABAUGH

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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER

COKESBURY TRAINING COURSE

E. B. CHAPPELL, Editor

**THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL
WORKER**

HIS LIFE AND WORK

By L. F. SENSABAUGH

**Author of "The Small Sunday School: Its Plans
and Work"**



**NASHVILLE, TENN.
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1926

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DEDICATION

To

THE MEMBERS OF MY STAFF

**Who share with me the ideals of
Christian service as presented in
these pages:**

**REV. J. Q. SCHISLER
MISS FLORENCE TEAGUE
MISS FRANCES McLESTER
MISS CORA PERKINS**

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FOREWORD

THE purpose of this book is to help the great company of men and women who are engaged in the work of the Sunday school to discover themselves as co-laborers with Jesus Christ in evangelizing the world, to interpret to them the meaning and significance of their task, and to inspire them with a determination to do a better piece of work in their various fields. If this great company of Christians can get from these pages a better grasp of what it means to be a Christian worker and can be inspired to equip themselves for more effective service in the name of Christ, the author will be well paid for his effort.

Above all else, it is the purpose of this book to interpret the efforts of the Sunday school worker in terms of evangelism, so that the Sunday school worker may become, in the best sense of the word, a fruit bearer, a soul winner, a character builder. THE AUTHOR.

NASHVILLE, TENN., January 28, 1926.

The Sunday School Worker: His Life and Work

CHAPTER I

A CALL TO CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Do you feel that you have been called to do Christian work? What caused you to accept the position that you now hold as an officer or teacher in the Sunday school? Have you ever stopped to ask yourself the question why you are doing what you are doing? Were you pressed into service against your will, and now do you hesitate to resign? Are you holding your present position because you have been holding it so long that you have formed the habit? Were they in need of some one to take a class or serve as an officer and did your conscience drive you to offer your services? Or do you really feel that God has a place for you and that you are in your place doing his work? Does the work bring joy and satisfaction? Do you sometimes ask yourself the question whether or not it is worth while? In brief, what does it mean to you to be an officer or teacher in the Sunday school?

If any of these thoughts have been in your mind, will you turn with me to consider a beautiful story that is recorded in the Gospels and see if we cannot discover the meaning of Christian service? It is the story of a meeting in an "upper room" in Jerusalem. It was the time of the Passover feast. Jesus had

gathered his disciples about him to eat with them the last passover before his death. For several weeks he had been continually teaching and preaching of a new kingdom which he had come to set up, and this naturally became the chief topic of conversation among the disciples. As soon as they had found their places about the table, they fell to quarreling among themselves as to which of them would occupy the positions of honor in this new kingdom. So intent were they upon seeking a high position in the kingdom that they lost sight of the real meaning of what it was and of discipleship in it.

This discussion about such selfish plans must have been very painful to Jesus. He was doubtless disappointed that these men who had been with him for three years could fail so completely to understand his teachings and his plans for them as to be thinking of personal advantage at such a time as this.

It was the custom at an oriental feast like this for the host to meet the guests as they arrived; to have their sandals removed and their feet bathed and dried. In preparing for the feast of the Passover, the disciples in charge had made all necessary arrangements for the rooms and for the food; the table was arranged and spread, but they had made no provision for anyone to care for this humble duty of removing the sandals and washing the feet of the guests. They thought they had a more important task to perform than this humble act of service.

But Jesus saw in their oversight an opportunity to turn such an instance of neglect into an object lesson.

As long as the gospel records remain for us this story will dignify the most humble labors of life. As the disciples were debating about their personal advancement, Jesus, the chief guest of the occasion, arose from the table, girded himself with a towel, and with pitcher and basin of water began to bathe the disciples' feet. "So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and sat down again, he said unto them: "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Teacher and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then the Lord and the Teacher have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."¹ In these beautiful words Jesus gave a new meaning to *service*, even the simplest and most humble service; and because of this beautiful story and the example that Jesus set, the word "service" is becoming common as a business term throughout the whole Christian world.

If the business world has discovered the value and meaning of service, how much more should the word be used and understood by those who follow the Great Teacher. As we notice how Jesus gave us an example to follow, we can see that to serve is to perform labor for the benefit of others. May we not also see that service for the Christian is close akin to duty—that is, for a Christian it is a duty to serve? As we think of the task that has been assigned to us as Christians in the Church or Sunday school, may

¹John 13: 12-15. (Revised Version.)

we not look upon it as one of the high privileges of service?

A DEFINITION

Webster defines service as "being in the employ of another," and "to wait upon others." What a wonderful definition this is for a Christian who has been called by his Church or by Christ to do any task, whether it be as a pastor, superintendent, secretary, teacher, steward, president, or officer in a class with any duties whatever to perform.

It was long before the Christian era that the Psalmist said: "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."¹ By this he meant that he had rather do the most humble service in the house of God than to be an officer of an army on the field of battle.

Some one has said that a servant is one who does what his master would have to do if he had no servant. Does this not give a larger meaning to the idea of service? Doing what Christ would have to do if he were present in the flesh with no servants at work for him—this is Christian service.

Have you ever viewed the work which you are doing in your local Church—perhaps it is passing the song-books, or taking the offering, or serving as secretary, or building the fires and putting the house in order—as something done because you are in the service of Jesus? This interpretation of what we are doing makes the task look different from ordinary em-

¹Psalm 84: 10.

ployment. Jesus promises that when we enter his service he calls us no longer servants, but friends. How much closer this draws us to him. There is no doubt but Jesus used the occasion of the Passover about which we have been thinking for impressing upon his disciples, and upon all the disciples who were to follow them, the meaning of discipleship. Listen to his words, "Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you."¹ It was only a few hours after this was spoken that he made the supreme sacrifice and gave himself for us. What more could we do for him than to give our time, our knowledge, and our talents for others.

SERVING OTHERS

The second part of our definition stated that "to serve is to wait upon others." The clear meaning of the words of Jesus are, that while he wishes us to recognize him as Lord and Master, his chief concern is that we should prove our love to him by serving others. We are to be his hands, his feet, his voice, and his heart. It was only a few years that Jesus lived in the flesh, but how those years were filled with service! When he went away he commanded his disciples to follow his example and carry on the work that he had begun. Much of his time was given to teaching,

¹John 13: 13-15. (Revised Version.)

and in this service of teaching we find one of the best methods of giving ourselves to others.

MANY KINDS OF SERVICE

Did it ever occur to you to sit down and list the different jobs that there are in running a farm? There are the housekeeping duties, the feeding, the milking, the wood cutting; many, many kinds of chores; and then the plowing, the hoeing and cultivating, the gathering and storing of the crops. There are jobs for many hands, something for every one to do, even the very smallest child can render a service for the good of the whole family, and one seldom gets so old that there is not something to which their hands can turn.

Or, take another illustration. How many jobs there are connected with the running of a railroad. There is, of course, the president, who looks after the finances; a vice president, who has charge of the passenger traffic; another officer in charge of building and keeping up the tracks; then there are the engineers, the conductors, the brakemen, the men who repair the engines, cars, and tracks, and the man who sits in a tiny office in a tower and gives direction to the movement of the trains. All of these men hold important jobs, and all of their jobs must be kept going.

Shall we say that the president has a more important job than the man who repairs the tracks? Let us see. If he is not a good financier the road may lose money; but if the track man does not do his job well, lives will be lost. The man who has charge of the passenger train must so arrange his schedules that collisions

will not occur; but if the man who sits in the tiny office in the tower should go to sleep or give a wrong signal, there would be a crash, a grinding of wheels, and the dead and dying strewn upon the ground. No, we cannot say that one position is more important than another. Each will have its certain responsibilities; but each position is important.

So it is with the work of the Church. There are many tasks to be done; some one must preach; some must teach; some must fill offices; but each task done in the name of Jesus is an important one.

It is interesting to know that when Paul was writing to the early Church he was constantly trying to tell them that some were called to fill one position and some to fill another. In his letter to the Romans, we read:

“In our one body we have a number of members, and the members have not all the same function; so, too, for all our numbers, we form one body in Christ, and we are severally members one of another. Our talents differ with the grace that is given us; if the talent is that of prophecy, let us employ it in proportion to our faith; if it is practical service, let us mind our service; the teacher must mind his teaching, the speaker his words of counsel; the contributor must be liberal, the superintendent must be in earnest, the sick visitor must be cheerful. Let your love be a real thing, with a loathing for evil and a bent for what is good. Put affection into your love for the brotherhood; be forward to honor one another; never let your zeal flag; maintain the spiritual glow; serve the Lord; let your hope be a joy to you; be steadfast in trouble,

attend to prayer, contribute to needy saints, make a practice of hospitality. Bless those who make a practice of persecuting you: bless them instead of cursing them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Keep in harmony with one another; instead of being ambitious, associate with humble folk; never be self-conceited. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone; aim to be above reproach in the eyes of all; be at peace with all men, if possible, so far as that depends on you.”¹

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME SERVICE

Now there are some tasks that require attention all of the time and some that can be done from time to time. There are some persons that have been called of God to devote all of their time and talent to the work of his Church; others who have been called to give only part of their time and talent. Those persons who give all of their time in this way are said to have a vocation within the Church. Such a person does nothing else for a living, and so the Church undertakes his support. There was a time in the history of the Church when all religious work was done by the priests, and laymen were never supposed to do anything except what priests told them to do. Then work was thought of as sacred if done by the priests and secular if done by a layman. But, if we understand the teachings of Jesus as they are given in our Passover story, *all work is sacred, all time is sacred; it belongs to God.*

¹Romans 12: 6-18. (Moffatt's translation gives a clearer meaning and is used in this quotation.)

Since Protestantism came to the world, we have both preachers and laymen engaged in full-time religious work. Some of the work, such as preaching, teaching, directing of social service, missions, superintending Conference Sundayschool work, editing religious papers requires full-time service. These are but some of the kinds of work that require full-time service; but it is only a small part of the work of the Church that is carried on by full-time workers. The preacher can no longer do all that needs to be done, and he calls to his assistance the members of his Church; and these are to do part-time work.

THE VOLUNTARY WORKER

Every one who has become a Christian ought to be a Christian worker. In consecrating his life to Christ he must consecrate some of his time and some of his talent and some of his energy in helping to bring the world to Christ.

The early Christian Church made very rapid progress, though it began in the midst of a pagan world. It did this because every convert became at once a Christian worker. There has never been a place in the Christian Church for "drones," though many Churches do have more "drones" than "workers." The very best that the Christian has is Christ, and the best evidence that he is a Christian is that he is trying to do something in the name of Christ. If a girl really loves her mother, she does not go about all the time telling how very much she loves her mother, but she does something to show her love for her mother—helping with the work,

running errands, doing kindnesses for her. Thus it is, if we love Christ we will show our love by our works. It would be well for all of us to pause now and then to think on the meaning of the homely old adage, "Actions speak louder than words."

William Carey, before he became one of the world's greatest missionaries, conducted a little shoe shop in his home town and over his bench there hung a sign which read: "My business is being a Christian; I cobble shoes to pay expenses." Carey had the true idea of being a Christian, it was his chief business in life. There are traveling salesmen who go about over the country selling goods for big manufacturing establishments. They may be selling shoes, hardware, groceries, or machinery; whatever it is, they call it their "main line"; but sometimes they carry something extra from another house, something that they can sell on the side and thereby earn a little extra money. They call this a "side line." Usually they keep rather quiet about the side line so that their real employers will not know about it. How much like these traveling salesmen are so many of our Christians! They are engaged in some big human enterprise, and they carry Christianity as a "side line," keeping very quiet so that the world will not know about it.

What the Christian Church and what the world is in need of to-day more than any other one thing is Christians who will make Christian work their "main line," with farming or dairying, or secular business, with teaching school or keeping house, merely as "side lines" to pay expenses.

NEED FOR VOLUNTARY WORKERS

There are at least two reasons why the work of the Church is in need of a large force of voluntary workers.

First, it would be impossible for the Church to support enough people to do all the Church needs to do. Just think what it would mean if we had to pay for everything that every member of the Church now does. There are sermons to be preached, Sunday schools, Epworth Leagues and missionary societies to be run, classes to be taught, funerals to be held, weddings to be conducted, sick people to be visited and comforted, strangers to be made welcome, social gatherings of all kinds to be given attention, and little acts of kindness that ought to be done every day, finances to be raised, the church kept in order—these and a thousand other things that can never be attended to unless a goodly number of the members of the Church may be depended upon to assist the pastor in doing them. He is indeed a useful pastor who can put the most of his people to work.

The second reason why lay workers like the ones just mentioned are needed is because a *working Church is a living Church*. Interest always lags when we quit working at any task, and interest grows when we make an investment of time or energy, talent or money. One reason why there are so many backsliders in the Church is because a large number who profess Christ never work at the job of being Christians. If you should let your right arm swing by your side and never use it for any purpose for several months, it would soon lose its strength and in time it would

wither away so that you could not move it. Exercise is one of the laws of life, so it is necessary for the life of the Church, and necessary for the life of the people, that they be kept engaged in Christian work; and only as they are kept at work can they grow or can the Church grow.

God does his mightiest works in the world when he is able to enlist men and women to help him. He may grow a tree out in the forest, but he must call upon man to cut the tree and to saw it and assemble it before a house can be built to shelter families. He may plant the clay in the ground, and it will remain there cold and damp until some potter answers his call and digs it up and molds and fashions it into dishes for our tables and vases with which to adorn our homes. He has planted tons of iron ore in the ground, but he must call upon man to dig deep into the earth and to mold it into tools and utensils for the house and farm. He planted wild corn and wheat and cotton on the prairies of the country; after a while he was able to enlist the intelligence of man, and skilled farmers began to study and work with God and were soon able to transform these wild plants and make them produce the full ear of corn and the golden grain of wheat or the long staple cotton to feed and clothe the race. God may plant a wild thorny flower by the side of the road or in the hedge, but he must enlist the aid of a florist to cultivate and train it before it will be converted into an American Beauty rose. When God and man work together, they bring blessings to the race, make life more fruitful, and make this a better world in which

to live. But there is a higher calling for men than to coöperate with God in the development of nature's resources. Into every home, into every community, and into every Church he is bringing little children, and he is trying to enlist fathers and mothers, preachers, Sunday school teachers, and others to coöperate with him in cultivating, educating, and training these growing lives, so that they may develop into beautiful Christian characters. It is to this task, then, that you have been called. If you are at work in the Church or in the Sunday school, with all of your time, your talent, and your energy devoted to the one big business of being a "worker together with God," you are both servants and friends of Christ.

CHAPTER II

THE WORKER HIMSELF

THOSE who work in the Church and the Sunday school are also expected to produce something. They must likewise always be adding to their knowledge of how and what to do in order to be fruitful. The Christian life is a growing life, and a growing life is fruitful.

In the second Epistle of Peter,¹ there is given a list of things that the Christian is to add to his life if he is to grow and be fruitful and be of real service in the Church. Jesus talked and the early writers of our New Testament repeatedly wrote about fruit bearing. It was Matthew who recorded that Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Now, of course, we know a tree by the kind of fruit it bears; just so we know a Christian by what comes out of his profession. Did not Jesus say, "By their fruits ye shall know them"?

So important was this for the Christian world that Peter wrote a letter to the early Church in which he set down some of the things which they would have to add to their lives if they would make them fruitful. There were Christians in that day who thought that all there was to being a Christian was to accept Christ and believe in the promises that had been given.

¹² Peter 1: 5-7. (Authorized and Revised Versions.)

Just like some Church members to-day who make a profession of faith in Christ and feel good over it, accepting the promises of forgiveness of sins, but failing to understand that all these promises are given conditionally. These Christians to whom Peter wrote had been given exceeding "great and precious promises," but he tells them that they must add something as they go along in their way of living if they are to be successful Christians.

Now, before one can be a successful Christian worker he must be a successful Christian himself. The truths contained in Peter's letter are as vital to-day as they were when he wrote them to the early Church, and every one who professes to be a disciple of Jesus should cultivate the qualities mentioned by the apostle. The first quality that Peter tells us to cultivate or add to our lives is "faith."

"FAITH"

Faith is a word that is very often misunderstood; sometimes it has very little meaning for those who use it. Just to say that one has faith is not enough. Faith must be directed toward some person or thing; it is something active. There is no such thing as a dead or inactive faith. According to the best definitions, faith means belief or trust accompanied by action. Suppose I have money to lend and my friend is in need. He comes to me to borrow, and I tell him that I have faith in his honesty and feel sure that he will repay; but I do not lend him the needed amount. He is a declaration of faith, but no action.

If we have a living faith in anything, we are willing to back up our faith by investing in the cause or person in whom faith is professed.

The Christian worker must have faith in Christ, faith in his Church, faith in his fellows, and faith in himself.

1. Faith in Christ. That he is really our personal Lord and Saviour; that he actually came into this world as a little child; that he grew up among the children and youths in his home town; that he came to manhood and spent his time in helping folks, caring for their needs, telling them about God and the kingdom which he was to establish; that he was crucified; that he rose from the grave; and that he lives and guides the lives of his followers—faith in a living, personal Christ. We must have faith in the message that he brought, and faith that his message has power to transform broken and sinful lives and make them clean; faith that he has power to lay hold of children and youth and enable them to grow up to mature Christian lives.

Faith involves our intellect, our will, and our affections. One cannot have faith in another until he has first-hand knowledge of him. He must know his manner of life, his habits, his way of thinking and acting. Faith cannot be blind, for it requires loyalty and fidelity. For this reason, faith in Christ will require first-hand knowledge and experience; whoever is lacking in this cannot have a living faith. One says of a neighbor: "I have faith in that man." You

ask why he has this faith, and his reply will be: "Because I have seen him put to the test."

2. Faith in the Christian Church. The Christian Church is made up of men and women who are often weak and sometimes not what they ought to be; still it is an institution founded by Christ, and he uses it for advancing his kingdom.

We ought to be able to sing with the hymn writer:

"I love thy Church, O God!
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand."

Yes, the Church is a divine institution through which the spirit of Christ seeks to minister to the religious, moral, social, and physical needs of mankind.

There are men and women who dishonor the Church at times, but, after all, it is made up of the best people in the world. And what we need to remember is that one who does not have faith in the Church of Christ can render but little real service as a Christian worker.

3. Faith in others. We must have faith in our fellow men. Sometimes they disappoint us and grieve us, but all of us are "workers together," and if distrust and doubts separate us from our fellow men, we can never hope to do much good for them. We are the children of the Heavenly Father, and he wants us to have faith in one another. It was because Jesus had faith in his disciples that they became men of courage and did such wonderful work for him. If any man ever had reason to lose faith in mankind, Jesus did.

4. Faith in oneself. In order to accomplish any-

thing worth while, one must have faith in himself. Not that we are to be puffed up or to think more highly of ourselves than we should think; but we need plenty of faith is our own ability to do what we set out to do.

Faith is the miracle word of the Bible. Did you ever read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews and see what wonders faith has accomplished? It is just as much of a miracle word to-day as it ever was in Hebrew times. It will do many things for the Christian; it brings "freedom from sin," "oneness with Christ," "sonship with the Father." It enables the Christian to "stand," to "walk," to "fight the good fight," so to live as to "obtain a good report."

These are all promises to those who have faith; but James tells us that "faith without works is barren." So our faith must put us to work if it is to bear fruit. "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him?"¹ "Faith, without deeds, is dead."² Peter knew what a temptation it would be for people just to say, "Yes, I am a Christian, I have faith," so he named many other things that have to be added to faith.

"ADD TO YOUR FAITH VIRTUE"

The second element in this list of Christian qualities is that of virtue. In the Revised Version of the Bible, this is translated "in your faith supply virtue." The original meaning of this word "virtue" was power, and we are, therefore, being urged by the apostle to

¹James 2: 14. (Revised Version). ²James 2: 20. (Moffatt).

add power to our faith or to set it in motion, put it to work. So Peter says put your faith to work; prove that you have faith by doing the work of a Christian.

But power itself needs direction, else it will run to waste and nothing will be accomplished. *We must know what to do and how to do it.* For this reason we are instructed to add

“KNOWLEDGE”

Here again, if we refer to this passage in the Revised Version of our Bible, we get a clearer meaning, for it says: “To your power supply knowledge”—not simply to add knowledge to virtue, but to have knowledge in the use of your power. People once made fun of the idea that one needed to be intelligent if he were engaged in religious work, but here we have one of Christ’s own apostles calling attention to the necessity of knowledge. So important does he think it to be that he places it right alongside of faith and love.

Sometimes there are people who claim great faith and who are very active in the work of the Church, but their lives seem to bear but little fruit. They are always doing something, but have very little to show for it in real results. A farmer might have faith in God, faith in the seasons, the sunshine and rain, faith in the soil; and to this faith he may add much hard labor. From early morning till late at night he may toil—plowing, harrowing, planting, hoeing, cultivating—but if he does not know what to plant and just when to plant it, his faith and works will not produce crops that are worth much. Both of these

elements combined are not able to make good crops grow out of season or on soil not suited to them.

Thus we see the importance of every officer and teacher in the Sunday school supplying knowledge to his work. In another chapter will be discussed some of the things to be known; but the matter of first importance just here is that the Sunday school worker shall realize the importance of knowing.

“TEMPERANCE” OR SELF-CONTROL

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

To have mastery of one's own self is indeed a very necessary Christian virtue without which a Christian can never become very fruitful. In this effort at self-mastery, the Christian may depend upon the Holy Spirit to assist him. Some of the hurtful tendencies that need to be brought under control by the Christian are bad temper, quarreling, gossiping, speaking sharp words that wound others, talebearing, excessive use of words, stretching the truth to carry a point, self-conceit, and thinking too highly of oneself. And to these there should be added certain other weaknesses, such as overeating, drinking, and the wasting of time, of money, of talents, and energies.

“PATIENCE”—STEADFASTNESS

Peter, you recall, had a good deal of trouble at this point. He lost his patience on the night that Jesus was being tried and denied that he knew him. No doubt he discovered from this and other experiences

how very important this quality of life is for a Christian.

There are so many things to discourage and so many people to provoke us that the Christian worker must cultivate this quality with all his power. It takes time to do things worth while, and we must learn to work and wait. It takes only a few weeks to grow a gourd, but many, many years to grow a great oak tree. It takes three or four years to grow a colt till it is old enough to be put to heavy work, but it takes many years for the infant to become a man; and it takes a whole lifetime to grow a character.

Theodore Parker once said: "The trouble is, I am in a hurry and God is not."

"GODLINESS"

History tells us that during the French Revolution a mob was in control of one of the principal streets of the city of Paris. Barricades were thrown across the streets and cannons placed behind them in order to stop the mob, but they rushed on, capturing one barricade after another, spiking guns and killing the soldiers till they came to where stood an old white-haired priest. With hands uplifted, he signaled for silence and said to the mob: "Citizens, sixty years of a pure life is about to address you."

A good man's presence did more to stop that mob than soldiers and cannons. On the tomb of a pioneer preacher in the West are inscribed the words: "His presence made bad men good." The godly life is the life that speaks with authority and has an influence in

every community. In the godly life all other virtues are measured according to God's scale of values.

The early Christians often referred to their religion as being "the way." They did not think of Christianity as a creed, for men had not yet formed creeds, but they took the words of Jesus, "I am the way," as a guide and tried to walk the "Jesus way." This was godliness in its purest form.

"BROTHERLY KINDNESS"

This virtue naturally follows after one has acquired the other qualities that we have been discussing, and a godly life cannot be lived apart from other folk, and it will make us kind to one another. We who are Christians are all members of one body, as Paul tells us, and we need to get along together in perfect harmony.

Suppose my right hand were to fall out with my left, or my ears get out of patience with my tongue. My, what a fix I would be in if this should happen! And yet this sometimes occurs in a Church. Brother "Right Hand" refuses to do anything because he doesn't like what Brother "Left Hand" is doing, and Sister Jones gets at cross purposes with Sister Smith, and they will not work together. Jesus was very plain about this matter of Christians getting along together, and gave us a new commandment, "that ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

"LOVE"

No one could make a list of Christian virtues without including love. "This is the message which ye heard

from the beginning, that we should love one another,"¹ said John, when, in after years, he was recalling some of the things that Jesus had taught his disciples. Every Christian ought to read often the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians. Here we find Paul in his letter telling us that the greatest thing in the world is love.

We can well bring to a close this little study of the personal qualities of a Christian by giving the closing words of Peter: "For as these qualities exist and increase with you, they render you active and fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."² He then goes on to say that those who do not cultivate these virtues are "blind and shortsighted."

Is your's a growing life or are you lacking in these qualities that are the measure of a Christian?

¹ John 3: 11. (King James Version.)

² Peter 1: 8. (Moffatt.)

CHAPTER III

THE WORKER HIMSELF

(CONTINUED)

IN the preceding chapter we were discovering some qualities of life that enter into the making of a Christian. That they are necessary for the worker in the Church or Sunday school is very evident. But one may possess a few or all of these personal qualities which we have mentioned and still be lacking in some things that are essential for successful work in the Sunday school. In this and the three chapters following we shall discuss some of the things that will make the Christian a successful worker.

A DEFINITE PURPOSE

Before a carpenter begins the construction of a house or building, he gets a picture in his mind of what he wants to do and then sits down with pencil and paper and begins to make the drawings or plans which he expects to follow. By doing this he knows just how many pieces of lumber to order, the amount of nails, shingles, doors, and windows to provide; and how to estimate the cost of the building. So it is when we enter upon any business. There must be a definite aim or goal. The Sunday school worker must get a mental picture of what it is that he is trying to accomplish, and then he will be able to work toward a definite end.

What is your aim, and what must be done to reach that aim? This is an important question. How will you answer it? Some one will say, "My aim is to run a nursery for the Church"; another will say, "My aim is to teach the Bible"; still another will say, "My aim is to impart religious truths." All these are worthy of our best effort, but none of them nor all of them will be a complete aim. The aim before the Sunday school officer and teacher should be to assist growing pupils to develop Christian character.

Providing a classroom, teaching the Bible, imparting knowledge are all *aids* to the achieving of our aim; but they are not the real aim. The Bible was written, Christ came into the world and lived among men, and the Christian Church was organized—these events took place not as ends in themselves but as aids to the one big aim of developing Christlike character in persons.

Many a Sunday school worker has gone about his task year after year without ever stopping to think just what it is he is trying to do. To attend Sunday school regularly, to read passages of Scripture, to ask questions and make comments on the lesson will amount to very little unless they lead to definite results.

A WILL TO LEARN

A young man had left his home in the country and had gone to a near-by city in search of employment. For several days he tramped up and down the sidewalks, in and out of offices and buildings, but always

without success. Thoroughly discouraged, he finally walked to the outer edge of the city, and in passing a great factory his eyes fell upon a card hanging in the window on which were the words: "Help Wanted." He entered and made known to the young lady who met him that he had come in to ask about the job advertised. She conducted him to a table and placed before him a sheet of paper on which was printed a long list of questions to be answered. There were questions about himself, his home, his age, his habits, his previous work and employers.

As he came to these questions about his experience and what he knew about the machinery and other matters, the young man realized just how very little he actually knew. He was anxious for work, and the unanswered questions seemed to say to him, "You do not know enough to get a job here," so he signed the paper with a sad heart. On a blank space at the bottom he added this line: "I guess I don't know much, but I can and will learn if you give me a job."

The office clerk took the paper from his hands and carried it into the inner office to be read by the manager. Rapidly glancing over the answers that had been given, he said: "This seems to be a fine, clean young fellow, but he doesn't know much." He was about to send a message out to the young man that he could not use him when his eyes fell upon the words at the bottom of the page: "I guess I don't know much, but I can and will learn."

This sentence revealed the real character of the youth; the "will to learn" was what was most needed, and he

was given the job. In the course of a few years his "will to learn" had so equipped him with knowledge of the business that he was called to become manager of the factory.

Business men are on the lookout for young men and women who have the "will to learn." This is also one of the greatest needs of the Church to-day. Few people heretofore have had opportunity to prepare themselves to be officers or teachers, but there are now so many ways by which they can become prepared that the principal thing which they need is a "will to learn."

VISION

Can you picture in your mind a group of three boys? You have no doubt seen many real flesh-and-blood boys that looked like these about whom I am going to tell you; and yet when you look at the picture, or when you look at real honest-to-goodness boys, what do you see? They are just three ragged, care-free, dirty-faced scamps. Is it the color of eyes or hair, the shape of head and size of body that you notice particularly? Just what do you see? Suppose these three boys were placed in your Sunday school class next Sunday morning, and that they looked just like they do in the picture. What would you see in them, and what would you try to do for them? Let us look into these open faces, down through those eyes of blue, or brown, or gray, deep down into the soul of these boys and see what we find. My, what a change it will make in our estimate when we get a look right into the soul of a boy or girl! A warm, throbbing, responsive life,

eager to be understood and hungry for friendship and guidance. Let us see if we can look into their faces and get a mental picture of what these three boys may become. What are their ambitions, hopes, and possibilities? The one to the left looks timid and shrinking, but if we could read the secrets of his soul we might find locked up within him those finer qualities of life that will make a painter, a sculptor, a poet, or perhaps a great musician. He has the soul of an artist, living in a frail, poorly clad body. What do we see in the boy in the middle of our group? A kindly face, square jaw, high forehead, and stocky body; but looking beyond these we see a future business executive, a great banker or manager of industry—these are his possibilities. The happy-go-lucky lad to the right; look at those wide-open eyes, the smile on the face, and the careless pose. Do you not see in him a great preacher, or lawyer, or statesman; a popular idol and general favorite? Look not upon the outward appearance, but at the inner soul if you would see the real pupil.

This is what the Sunday school worker must do for every boy and girl in the school—look deep down into their souls and catch a vision of the possibilities that lie hidden beneath the surface. Not till we do this can we ever know just how to plan our work, what methods to use, what lessons to choose. To know each pupil; to see his possibilities, and to have a definite aim for his development will be the first essential for success.

WILLINGNESS

No one succeeds whose heart is not in his work. The soldier who goes into battle unwilling to serve his country never makes a good soldier. One cannot do his best when driven to a task. Slaves may be driven, but free men never. Enforced service is never a heart service. To be driven to the task of teaching or working in the Sunday school is to invite failure. Our work is blessed when we *will to do* the work of the Master because we *love* to do it.

Boys and girls, and even very little children, can quickly tell whether the teacher loves the work which he is doing; and one of the most frequent reasons why boys and girls between the ages of ten and twenty drop out of Sunday school is because they discover that their teacher is not in love with them or with his work. Closely related to willingness is

ENTHUSIASM

If there are any people on earth who should be enthusiastic about their work, they are the persons who have been called to be officers or teachers in the Sunday school. The word "enthusiasm" comes from a Greek word which means to be filled or inspired by God, and as we use it to-day it means to be eager—eager about a person or about some ideal.

As Christians, we cannot help being enthusiastic or eager about our great Teacher, and his gospel should fill us to overflowing with enthusiasm. When we realize that our work is with beautiful childhood

and challenging youth, we ought to be more than eager to do our best.

Long before Christ came, away back in early Hebrew times when the religious leaders were looking far into the future moved by the hope of a coming Messiah, the poets wrote songs that were filled with enthusiasm. Did you ever examine the Psalms to see how often we find expressions of joy? Now joy is the result of enthusiasm, and when the angels came to announce the birth of Jesus they filled the heavens with songs of joy. John the Baptist said that his "joy was made full" when he had opportunity to witness for Jesus. Though the early Christians were persecuted and often put to death, they went about everywhere filled with enthusiasm and joy for their work. Surely we who enjoy so many blessings that come to us because of our religion should "rejoice and be exceedingly glad."

There is no quality of character that will carry the Christian worker over hard places and through heart-breaking experiences more easily than a real enthusiasm for and joy in service. It is to the Christian what the electric spark is to the automobile engine; it keeps the motor turning. It is the inner urge that drives us on to our task. We must remember, however, that enthusiasm may run wild and do more harm than good. It must be accompanied with intelligence and judgment, and, above all, with good common sense.

Uncontrolled enthusiasm is in danger of burning out quickly like a grass fire on the prairies, so it needs to be accompanied by

STAYING QUALITIES

The writer grew up in the mountains of Colorado, and each summer it was the custom for a number of families to go into the sections that had been visited by forest fires and gather wild raspberries for canning and preserving. Sometimes prizes would be offered to the boy or girl who would bring the largest quantity of berries into the camp at night. Early in the morning parties would start out in search of raspberry patches, and whenever a new patch was discovered that seemed to be filled with berries, a shout would go up and most of the boys and girls would flock to the new patch and rush from bush to bush for berries. But one boy seemed to win the prize every day, and the secret of his success lay in the fact that when he found a patch or bush he would stick to it until his buckets were filled. It was his ability to stick to his bush and work right along that brought reward.

How easy it is to be turned aside, to be discouraged and want to quit or try something else. But a Christian should never be a quitter; giving away to this suggestion is the reason why many people backslide in their Christian experience. To become discouraged and quit is to give the chances of defeat the upper hand. Are you ever tempted by a voice within which says: "Don't you see that you are making no progress? Why keep on?" Or, sometimes the voice will say: "Some one else could do this better than you; why not quit?"

Now, it may be that some one else could do this

piece of work better, but for you to quit will not help matters unless you have done your best to find out the cause of your failure or unless some one else has actually been found to do your work. In this case, you should not quit the work of the Church, but should take some other job that you can do better than some one else.

No one should ever continue to hold the sacred place as officer or teacher in the Sunday school when some other person can and will do better in that place, for there are so many places to work that every one should be doing the kind of work that he can do best.

We should not be easily discouraged, for it takes time to secure results. The farmer sows his wheat in the fall and then waits till summer to harvest it; or, he plants an orchard and waits for years before he gathers the ripened fruit. Paul tells us that in our Christian work some are to plant, some to cultivate, and some to gather the harvest, but that we must leave the results with God. The faithful and patient toil of many an officer or teacher may not bear fruit till long years have passed after he is done.

The story is told that many years ago when Belgium became famous for its hand-woven rugs and tapestries, the weavers used to sit at the loom day after day weaving the colored threads back and forth, working all the while from the back side of the frame, and that they never saw the beautiful design from the front till the work was finished. So it often is in our Christian work. We see only the knotty, seamy, irregular side of our work, but if we are faithful the Great Artist will some

day lead us to the front side of our work, and then we shall be able to see how poorly or how well it has been done.

THE SELF-EFFACING SPIRIT

"Not I, but Christ" was the way in which Paul thought of his life work. One of the most hurtful things that can happen in Christian work is for people to push themselves too much into the limelight. It is Christ's Church, Christ's work, and we should never come to think of it as being ours apart from Christ. "My school," "my class" will sometimes make us lose sight of the real ownership. We are not owners, but stewards, and we must never assume to do our work as though the enterprise belonged to us alone.

Some boys were playing on the curbstone of a city street one summer's afternoon when the oldest of the group found a broken piece of mirror. He wiped off the face of it and began to reflect the rays of the sun into the eyes of those who were passing by, very much to their discomfort. His playmates found some broken pieces of window pane and were trying to reflect the sun's rays, but with no success. A gentleman watched their unsuccessful efforts for a few minutes and then explained why it was that the broken piece of mirror would reflect the light and the broken window pane would not. He showed them that on the back of the mirror there was a coating of quicksilver which caught the light and reflected it, while there was nothing on the plain glass that would do this.

What a lesson this is for the Christian worker. Jesus

said, "Ye are the light of the world," but it is only as our lives reflect his life that we can point others to him. When others look to us, do they look through a broken piece of glass, or do our lives *reflect* the life of Jesus?

These, then, are some very essential elements in successful Christian work: A definite aim or goal. A vision of our task and an appreciation of the possibilities of development in those with whom we are working; a willingness to do the work as unto the Lord; a fine enthusiasm for the work and joy in doing it, and the ability to keep self in the background and exalt Christ as "all in all."

CHAPTER IV

THE WORKER HIMSELF

(CONTINUED)

A CONSISTENT LIFE

OF all the influencing things that surround and effect the growing life of the child, none are more important than the persons with whom he is associated.

What teacher do you remember best? You will find that it was not necessarily the one with the best education, nor the one who imparted the most information, but the one who gave the most of himself to you.

Have you not observed the little child about the home in its play, imitating the things that are done by the older members of the family? The father mounts a horse and rides away to town; the little fellow in the yard straddles a stick and rides around the house to "play town"; or the little girl is seen under a tree or porch cooking a meal just like she has seen her mother do it. This is nature's way of beginning the education of a child, and we call it *imitation*. Like a vine that reaches out its tendrils to climb the fence or the frame, so the nature of the child is reaching out to take hold of those things that it may make its very own. The child is no sooner born into the home than its character begins to form. While he comes with some qualities that he inherits from his ancestors, his real character formation sets in as soon as he becomes conscious of his surroundings.

He is born into the world neither good nor bad; he is a "candidate for character"; this business of achieving character is affected by the association and suggestions that come from those who touch his early life. Unconsciously, the things that his elders do are becoming a part of the child just as the air he breathes sustains his life. Some one has said that we are a part of all we meet, and educators are agreed that the major part of what we learn comes from association. All of us will find placed hanging upon the walls of memory impressions for good or evil that were placed there very early in life. The relation of the Sunday school worker to the pupils whose lives he touches is one of the most intimate of all his associations; and whatever the officer or teacher may be, he is sharing his life with the class, he is serving as a pattern by which each pupil is ordering his life and conduct. Does the Christian worker distort truth, have convenient lapses of memory, tell smutty stories, use angry words, or bad language, or show his temper? These are all passed over to the growing child and enter into his education.

A Greek poet tells us that every one knew when the Goddess of Spring passed by because of the blessings she left in her path. Her footprints were not in the sea, soon fading, nor in the snow, soon melting, but in the fields and forests. This unseen goddess passed by the tree blackened by the lightning stroke, and when she had gone a woodbine sprang up to cover its black form; she stood beside the stagnant pond, and it became a flowing spring; at the crossing of the brook, and in the meadow were her footsteps, not in the mud,

but in the grasses and wild flowers. In similar fashion our lives as Christian workers are leaving their silent influence upon the lives of those who are our pupils.

A man who has risen to prominent place in his Church was thinking over the names of all the persons who had influenced his life as he was growing from childhood to manhood; and in all the list he discovered that one person, a plain, little woman who had her home on a little dairy farm and delivered milk in the small town where he lived as a boy, had made the most lasting impression for good upon his life. Though in poor circumstances and working hard for her family, she set such a beautiful example of Christian living that no boy passed through her class without becoming a better boy.

The formal lessons that she taught have long ago been forgotten, but the life she lived, the example she set, have become a part of his character and will never be forgotten.

So, it is very important that we look carefully after some of the things that seem little to us at times but which are entering in a big way into the character of our pupils.

DEPENDABILITY

Said a pastor one day: "That woman is one of the best-trained women in my Church. She is capable in every way; but I can never depend upon her. She will promise to do things, and then get busy at other things and never do it." You have been elected to an office, or appointed to teach a class in the Sunday school. You love to do the work. You do your work well

when you are present, but if the weather is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry; or if some other matters come up that call you away, can you be depended upon to be in your place? Or must your work go undone for that time? You are engaged as an officer or teacher in the Church; you are a personal representative of Jesus Christ; you have a group of children depending upon you for religious nurture. What must they think of your loyalty to Christ, your notion of religion, your appreciation of them? If you are dependable, if the Church can always count on your being in your place, you are imparting the quality of *steadfastness* to the pupils of the school. Never make promises to the Church, to the school, to the pastor, or to your pupils that you do not keep.

REGULARITY

If a watch or clock is irregular in running, we say it will not keep good time, and we have it repaired or get a new one, for a clock that will not keep regular time upsets all our plans. So it is with the irregular person in the Sunday school, present one Sunday, absent the next, you can never tell what to expect of them. Such a person has no place in the organization of the Sunday school.

In some parts of the country there are springs that run for a while and then go dry. They are wet-weather springs and no one ever thinks of depending upon them for a permanent water supply. They look to the spring that runs the year around. Some people in religious work are like wet-weather springs, they go through a

big revival and get a "blessing" and then run like everything for a short time. After awhile bad days come on, rain and snow fall, the weather gets cold and the roads muddy, and before long the revival blessing cools off, and they begin to be irregular in attendance, and by the time spring comes they stop altogether. It is the steady, month-after-month Christian; hot-weather or cold-weather, good-weather, bad-weather Christian who will be able to demonstrate by his regularity that he actually believes in his religion, and that it is worth all that he invests in it.

PROMPTNESS

Promptness is such an important factor in the business world that it determines what credit a man has at the bank. One may be worth a great deal, but if he is slow in paying his obligations, his credit is poor. Promptness in attendance upon services at the church, promptness in meeting one's obligations to the Sunday school, to the class—this is a matter that plays a very important part in the forming of character.

If the superintendent is late, everything gets a late start and time is wasted by the whole school. If the musical leader, the organist, or the pianist is late, then things are delayed till this person comes or some one else can be secured. If the teacher is late at the session of the school or in meeting the class, there is confusion and delay. Suppose you are late, and your lateness delays the work of the whole school for just five minutes. Multiply this by the number of persons present and you have the amount of time that has been

wasted. The time we have in Sunday school is all too short at best, and to lose any of that time is serious waste indeed.

SINCERITY

Christian work offers no place for sham. Whatever we are, let us be that and not pretend to be what we are not. The story is told of a sculptor who was given the task of carving the stone trimming for an ancient temple. As the work was progressing, there were certain flaws discovered in the carvings, and they were rejected by the master builder and returned to the sculptor for new stones. Eager to complete his work, he took the defective stones and covered up the flaws with wax. So cleverly was the work done that when they were returned to the master builder they were accepted and hoisted into place.

At last the building was completed and the work of the sculptor was honored by having his own statue placed on a pedestal in the entrance to the building; and the people sang the praises of the artist who had so beautifully adorned the temple. As months went by the summer came and its heat melted the wax, and great ugly defects that had been so cleverly covered up began to appear, and soon the artistic beauty of the building was destroyed. The statue of the sculptor was demolished; he barely escaped with his own life, and forever after that it became the requirement of all builders that work in stone should be done "without wax." These two Greek words combined together became our word "sincere."

HIS LIFE AND WORK

To be sincere is to be genuinely true, real, honest. When one is dealing on the one hand with the great eternal truths of Christianity and on the other with human souls, he should not be other than sincere.

It was the warm rays of a summer's sun that melted the wax away and revealed the defects in the temple stones; it is the piercing eyes of boys and girls that will look beneath the mask and discover whether the professions of the Sunday school worker are real or false. Hide nothing, and you need have no fear of being found out. Put on no false appearance, and you will have nothing to be ashamed of. Nothing will give better assurance of a good conscience than to know that "I am what I pretend to be. About me there is no make believe." Nothing can be more hurtful than for a young life to be disappointed in one who has come to hold the confidence and respect of those who know him. In selecting those who are to touch young life, let only those who are sincere be chosen.

LOYALTY

When our country is at peace with other nations, we do not hear a great deal said about loyalty to country or flag, but when we go to war we hear much about the loyalty or disloyalty of our neighbors. Now loyalty may be indicated more by what people do than by what they say. Acts of treason are more quickly and severely punished than are words spoken against the government. The worst kind of disloyalty is to give aid and comfort to those who are enemies of our country. In the Christian life, not only is loyalty a

test of character, but disloyalty is more hurtful than the opposition of those who are not Christians.

We condemn the acts of Judas more severely than we do those of the soldiers who actually put Jesus to death, and the reason is that he pretended to be a friend and follower, but turned out to be a traitor. Christianity is always at war with sin and with the evil organizations and forces in every community, and those who are workers in the Church school need always to be loyal to their profession, or they become traitors, and thus do more harm to the Church and the program of Christianity than can ever be done by those outside the Church.

First of all, the Christian worker must be loyal to his own profession. Temptations to be disloyal do not come when we are at church or in the presence of a company of other Christians, but when we are engaged in other things, when we are about the regular round of duties in the house, on the farm, in the store.

The test may come to you where a group is gathered in town on Saturday or a holiday, and some one begins to scoff at religion or to make fun of some preacher or Church. Do you keep still and laugh with the crowd, or do you resent insults to your religion as you would resent insults to the flag of your country? This does not mean that the Christian is to show his temper or fly into a rage, but that he is to let it be known that he does not approve of such language. If necessary, let him quietly withdraw from such company. Every person respects one who is really loyal to his religious convictions.

The Christian should be loyal to his Church. This does not mean that we are always to be boasting of our Church and comparing it with others. On the contrary, we must have full regard for the loyalty of other people to the Church of their choice. Nevertheless, if we have joined the Church, we owe it to the Church to give it our loyal support. To speak ill of the Church, its members or its officers, is but to speak ill of ourselves, for all of us in the Church are "all members one of another." The Church is made up of groups of people who can work harmoniously together for advancing the kingdom of Christ, and we ought to place our membership with that Church which more nearly conforms to our ideas. Above all things, the worker in the Sunday school ought to be most tolerant of the religious beliefs of other individuals; this was the practice of Jesus. Not that we are all to agree, but that in our disagreements we are to live together in the love and brotherhood of the Christian Church.

The Church is a divine institution, and sincere loyalty to it is a Christian duty. It is the organization through which the Christian message is to be given to the world, and only those who are loyal to its program and leadership should seek or accept places of responsibility in its membership. Loyalty to the Church will require a knowledge of its teachings, its history, and its methods for carrying on its work. The Church has, therefore, the right to expect that the officers and teachers in the Sunday school shall be informed on these things.

Loyalty to Leadership.—Nothing will more quickly destroy the effectiveness of any organization than to

be constantly criticizing those in authority. The pastor is the recognized spiritual leader of the local Church. He has a right to expect the loyalty of his official associates in the Sunday school. The officers and teachers may have had nothing at all to do with the selection of the pastor, but as long as he serves as pastor he is entitled to the whole-hearted, loyal support of these persons. He may not be very much interested in the Sunday school program. This is most unfortunate when true; but we will not help matters by criticizing him. Cultivate him; he is human like the rest of us, and he will usually give a sympathetic hearing to our requests. Be loyal to the man who is the spiritual head of the local Church.

We have discussed in this chapter some things that may seem of very little importance, but in our task as character builders they have a big place, because they enter into character day after day and hour by hour. Let it be said of you that as a Christian worker you can always be depended upon, that you are regular and prompt in the discharge of your duties, that your life is sincere and true in little things as well as in big things, and that at all times you are loyal to your Christian profession, your Church, and your leaders.

CHAPTER V

THE WORKER HIMSELF

(CONTINUED)

PHYSICALLY FIT

WHEN America entered the World War, one of the startling discoveries then made was the very large percentage of men who were physically unfit for military service. If a similar survey could be made of the physical fitness of those who are engaged in Christian work, no doubt an equally large number of persons would be discovered who were physically unprepared to carry on the hard work that is required of the Christian worker. To teach religion means a great deal more than merely to impart Bible knowledge or to give instruction to growing pupils; it means that the Sunday school worker is to share his life and experience with the learner. Some one has well said that "the teacher's life is the life of his teaching." This means that the personality of the Sunday school worker will occupy a very important place in the life of the pupil. In fact, through the power of their personality Sunday school workers will do some of their best work. Personality is a hard thing to define, but of this we are sure, it includes the whole person—physical, mental, social, and spiritual. Life is so constituted that the whole of one's nature is bound up together. We have already seen that when the pupil comes to our Sunday school he comes with the whole of his nature. So it is with the officer and teacher. The whole of personality is there.

One does not leave his physical or mental defects at home and just take his religious nature along with him when he goes to church. Religion can never be successfully used as a cloak to cover up defects in personality. It is very necessary, therefore, that whoever is to serve in the capacity of officer or teacher in the Sunday school must be physically equipped for the task.

In choosing those who are to serve in any capacity, the question of whether they are able to do the work is seldom raised, and many a frail person has through a sense of duty assumed a responsibility that was far beyond his strength. This does not mean that a beautiful and fruitful Christian life cannot be lived by persons who have physical ailments. Fanny Crosby, whose wonderful hymns have been sung all around the world, was blind from childhood and for many years confined to her bed, yet she was able to develop a great soul to live in that weak body. She blessed millions by the life she lived and the hymns she wrote; but Fanny Crosby could hardly have been able to minister to the needs of a restless group of growing junior boys. Those who are to be successful in dealing with the throbbing, restless, energetic life of our boys and girls must be physically able to enter into their activities, to sympathize with their buoyant spirits, and enjoy their play and recreation with them. There are many, many fine services which may be rendered in the name of the Church and of Christ by those who have frail bodies, but if one is to fill a position of responsibility in the Sunday school, he will need to be physically able to meet the demands of the task.

NEATNESS OF PERSON

Not only does the Sunday school worker need to be in good physical condition, but his personal appearance will have a great deal to do with the impression that he is to make upon the pupils in his class or school. Clothes do not make the man, but the way they are worn will reveal certain very definite traits of character that readily become a part of the life of the pupil. One person may be in very poor circumstances, and yet always appear neat, clean, and attractive, while another may be in much better circumstances and wear his clothes in a slovenly and unkempt manner.

“Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.”¹

If we who follow Christ to-day could come to realize the truth of what Paul was saying of the early Christians, it would help us a great deal in taking care of our bodies: and it would make a great deal of difference as to our personal appearance. God took upon himself the form of a man in order that he might the better reveal himself to the race. So Christians in turn have been charged to represent Jesus Christ in the appeal of their own personality. Our knowledge of God is best gained by knowing what Jesus did and how he conducted himself when he was here upon earth. The impression that our pupils gain of what it means to be a Christian will largely be determined by the

¹1 Corinthians 6: 19, 20. (Revised Version.)

impression that is made upon them by the personality of those with whom they come in contact. At another place in this book attention has been called to the important place of imitation and suggestion in the development of character. We need to refer to it again here since the pupils who come to Sunday school are forming their ideas and habits from their contact with the officers and teachers who conduct the school. What these workers do, and the way they appear, will many times speak louder than anything they are able to say. In our public schools, a great deal of attention is being given to teaching the laws of physical health and training the children in neatness and tidiness of personal appearance. Surely those who are engaged in this important task of helping to form character should in their own personal appearance set an example that is worthy of being imitated. It is always expected that when one goes to a party or a wedding he will dress up and look his very best, and this is as it should be. Why should we not also expect that when one goes to the "House of God" he should try also to look his very best? This does not mean the putting on of costly or extravagant clothes; but it does mean to our pupils that the Lord's work requires the very best that we have and that our personal appearance should be neat, clean, and modest. One of the saddest things in the Sunday school is to meet teachers so flashily dressed and so powdered and painted as to appear entirely artificial. Extremes in style of dress or in gaudy colors are to be avoided just as truly as carelessness and slovenliness. Being one's real self, looking

one's best, will set an example that will assist in the development of character.

ON BEING TIRED

How often does it happen that when the Sunday school worker is asked as to how he feels, he will reply: "I am so tired this morning that I can hardly put one foot before another." How can one in such a condition as this render his best service? Christian worker, do you think you are being honest with God or honest with the pupils in the school or class when you come to perform this sacred duty tired and worn out physically?

To expend all of one's physical strength during the week in housework or business, in recreation or pleasure, and then to come to the church on Sunday morning completely exhausted is nothing less than robbing God and sorely disappointing your pupils. God expects of us that we give him a due share of our time and of our strength as well as our talents and our money. So often we hear it said: "I do not have time to do this or that;" but had you ever stopped to think that every one has the same amount of time? There are twenty-four hours for each of us in every day and seven days in every week. Our difficulty is not that God has given some of us more time than others; but the fault lies in that all people do not make the same use of their time. The housewife who has spent all day Saturday in cleaning and baking and getting ready for a big day Sunday cannot do her best work when she goes to Sunday school on Sunday morning. Neither can the

farmer who makes Saturday a day of unusual toil, nor the merchant who works late on Saturday night, nor the young person who spends Saturday in reckless dissipation be in any other than a tired and worn-out condition when Sunday morning arrives. One of the very best things that can be done by the Christian worker is so to plan his leisure hours that Saturday afternoon and Saturday night may be times of building up his physical and nervous energy in order to have them at his command on Sunday morning. The right use or the wrong use of Saturday afternoon and Saturday night will often determine the success or failure of the Sunday school hour.

THE NERVOUS PERSON

Persons who are nervous and easily irritated should not be placed in charge of children and young people as officers or teachers. Go into most any Sunday school and you will hear the complaint made that the children who come to Sunday school, or certain groups of them, are wild, noisy, restless, and ungovernable. Their misbehavior is oftentimes attributed to the homes from which they come. Many times that is true. Some parents teach their children to behave well at home and at public school, but it never occurs to them to teach good behavior at church. But the trouble does not always rest with the home.

If we look carefully enough, we are apt to find that some of the older persons who are serving as officers or teachers are themselves of a nervous, irritable disposition and by their example transmit their nervous-

ness to the children as they come into the church. Older persons are able to control themselves more easily; but the nervous systems of children and young people are very delicate and sensitive and respond quickly to the atmosphere that is created by their elders. Too often the children are blamed when it is not their fault at all.

Suppose the superintendent comes rushing into the church all out of breath, moves rapidly and noisily about, announces his songs in a loud voice; or suppose the teacher, fidgety and with nerves on edge, takes her place with the class. Can we expect anything else but that the children will catch the same spirit and that confusion and disorder will be the result? Sometimes the person who leads the singing contributes very much to the confusion by tossing songbooks to persons who are not supplied and wildly waving his arms or stamping his feet in his effort to conduct the music. Does not such conduct on his part suggest to the mischievous boy an imitation of the song leader? General confusion will make it a temptation for him to throw hats and caps, books and paper wads at various persons around the room. A careful study of the conditions in any Sunday school where there is general disorder and bad conduct will often lead back to the example that is set by some older person or persons.

The Sunday school worker, as he comes to this particular Sunday morning service, should remember that it is the Lord's day, the Lord's house, and that he and the others are to engage in the Lord's service. They

should, therefore, have themselves well in hand and conduct themselves as becomes those who are engaged in such a sacred activity. Much of the carelessness of conduct in small Sunday schools is due to the fact that so often the place of meeting is in a public school or other public building, and people have not, therefore, attached to it the sacredness and holiness that is usually attached to a Church. The Sunday school worker should remember, however, that wherever a religious service is held, for that time at least the place is dedicated to the service of God and should be respected as such.

There is no work in the world other than that of parenthood that will require greater physical and nervous energy than that of the Sunday school worker, and persons who are thus engaged should so plan their time and work that proper rest and recreation and sleep will put them in the best possible physical condition for Sunday morning.

MENTALLY FIT

In a former chapter, it was pointed out how very necessary study was for the personal enrichment of the life of the Sunday school worker. His mental preparation, however, must include something more than the enrichment of his own life. He must give much time to preparation for sharing his own experience with those for whom he is responsible. It sometimes happens that persons with good general education do not make a success as workers in the Sunday school. The reason for this is that they are lacking

in that special preparation that is necessary for this particular work.

A general education will assist very materially in helping one to prepare for work in a Sunday school, but there is a good deal of special knowledge that will also be required. One may know a great deal about history or geography or literature, and yet know very little about his pupils, about the general laws that govern their growing life. He may know little of the things that interest them or of their possibilities at the various stages of their development; he may not be able to notice the characteristics that mark each of the pupils in the class or school. Just as there are no two trees in the forest that are exactly alike, so there will be no two persons that come to the Sunday school whose natures and needs are similar. This will require constant study upon the part of the officers and teachers, who must always be on the lookout to discover what are the things of interest and what are the spiritual needs of each individual in the school. Too often the Sunday school lesson is prepared by the teacher as though all the pupils in his class were exactly alike, had the same capacity, and were interested in the same things. This is the reason why so many Sunday school teachers fail.

In order that one may know his Sunday school pupils, he must ever be on the lookout for things that are happening in the community, in the home, in the public school that have importance for the life of each pupil. Unless he does this he will not be able to share

in the experiences of the pupil and minister to his actual needs.

THE MIND MUST BE KEPT GROWING

Those who work in the Sunday school are dealing with growing life, and whenever they themselves stop growing mentally, the day of their usefulness is fast coming to a close. We often hear young people refer to their elders as "back numbers" or "old fogies." This is not always a term of derision, but more often it means that these young people have discovered that their elders have stopped growing mentally. One of the surest ways for a Christian worker to continue to grow is to keep an open mind; when the mind is closed new and fresh truth cannot enter.

The Sunday school worker in his study and thinking will naturally form certain convictions; indeed he ought to be a person of strong convictions; but care must be taken that convictions do not harden into prejudice. Whenever any person sets his mind and says, "This is final. I have made up my mind. I will not listen to anything else. I will read nothing new on the subject," that very minute the mind of that person is closed and growing stops. Of all the persons in the world who need to keep an open and a growing mind, it is that one who is dealing with the great truths of life and religion.

God is revealing laws in new and wonderful ways in each succeeding generation, and for an adult to depend upon the sum total of truth as he knew it in his own youth will mean that he has lost step with the ongoing of the world. The person who has convictions

will command respect, but the person who relies upon prejudice will lose the respect of his fellows and separate himself from contact with the younger generation. The Sunday school worker who would keep his mind fresh and growing must know what his pupils are learning and what they are thinking about. He must realize that a brand-new body of knowledge has come to them since he went to school, and if he would make the point of contact that is so necessary in real teaching, he must be able to think with them.

A KNOWLEDGE OF METHODS

When gold was discovered in California, people from the Eastern States traveled to the far West on horseback and in covered wagons drawn by oxen, mules, and horses. This was a slow and dangerous method of crossing the rolling prairies and the mountains, but it was the best method that was available at that time, and whoever wanted to go to the Golden West used these means of travel. Since that day steel rails have been laid from the Atlantic to the Pacific and paved highways run in every direction, and now when people start West they travel by train or auto, while occasionally the daring ones go by airplane. The train and automobile are much safer, easier, quicker, and better ways of traveling, and we would be amazed to find anyone using the ox team and the covered wagon.

Just as such changes have been made in methods of travel, so vast improvement has been made in methods of farming, building, conducting our business, carrying

on our trade, and in the way we conduct our education. There is just as much reason why the Sunday school worker should know the improved methods in education as they are being used in our public schools as there is for him to be familiar with modern methods in any other form of life work. The discoveries that have been made for us by the public school ought to be known by the Sunday school worker, because the same laws of learning that govern the study of history and geography work in the study of the Bible and other religious truths. If the public school teacher uses the latest and best methods in his history classes, and the Sunday school teacher uses old and discarded methods in teaching the Sunday school lesson, it will be very natural for the boys and girls to get much more out of their history study than they do out of their religious study. With growing pupils and changing methods, the Sunday school worker will need to be constantly adding to his mental equipment and his store of knowledge. One may be able to fool adults as to what he knows, or he may be able to fool himself, but he will never be able to fool the boys and girls who come to him from the public school.

If the Sunday school worker is not constantly studying to show himself an approved workman, he is not worthy of a place of trust in the Sunday school. The superintendent or teacher who never gives a thought to his work until he starts to Sunday school on Sunday morning and who takes no papers and reads no new books that will keep his mind fresh and informed is not worthy of the position he occupies.

HIS LIFE AND WORK

THE NECESSITY OF TRAINING

For many years very little attention was given by the Church to the training of its workers. It was thought that anyone who was good or willing could be pressed into service with never a thought as to their fitness; but that day has passed, and now every Christian denomination is providing some means whereby its Sunday school workers may be more thoroughly prepared. There is no longer any good reason why a person who is set to a task in the Sunday school may not secure some preparation for his work. There are at least four very definite ways in which help may be secured by anyone who has the will to learn.

HELPS AND GUIDES

First of all, there are the helps and guides for officers and teachers that appear regularly in our Church's monthly or quarterly literature. This material is published in the form of magazines, teacher's notes, and special studies of the materials which are being used. If these helps are regularly supplied by the local Church to its workers and read and studied by them, they will get a better knowledge of how their work should be done. In this connection, it ought to be said that the workers' helps and guides that are published by their own denominational publishing house will always be found of much greater value than are those published by the independent or commercial houses.

There are three very good reasons why this is true. First, the denominational leaders who prepare them

are thinking of the help that they can render to the workers and to the pupils and not of the amount of money that is to return to the publishers in the form of profits; the second reason why they are best is because the denominational leaders are better acquainted with the people of their own Church and can, thereby, prepare helps that will meet the particular needs of their own people more nearly than can be done by independent publications; a third good reason is that every denomination has the right to expect that the officers and teachers in their Sunday schools shall study lesson helps that are in harmony with their own denominational practices and teachings, and this can best be secured when the helps are prepared and published by the denominational leaders.

INSTITUTES

Another very good way by which help may be secured is through the community, county, or district institute where a number of workers from other places and other Churches will come together and discuss the particular problems of each and exchange their experiences. The value of the institute will depend upon the knowledge of those who are in charge or who lead in the various discussions. Such meetings will, as a rule, furnish real help and inspiration to those who are in search of more knowledge.

BOOKS

Lesson helps and institutes will, however, not be enough to fully qualify the Sunday school worker for

his task. In the very nature of the case, they are only temporary provisions. The growing, useful worker will be continuously searching for new books to read, and every local Church owes it to those who give their time and talent to supply them with a worker's library. This should be a collection of the latest and best books that are to be had, and such an investment will return large dividends for many years. In such a library there should be books dealing with every phase and every problem of the modern Sunday school; the Church in turn should urge its workers to read and study diligently the books from such a library.

TRAINING COURSES

The most helpful means of assisting workers in securing an abiding preparation for their work will be found in a training course. This text which is now being studied is one of the units in such a course. It is attempting to deal with only one phase of the whole task, which is a study of the life and work of the one who is engaged in Sunday school work. Each of the other texts in the course will deal with a specific phase or subject, such as how to organize and conduct the small Sunday school, how the laws that govern the life of the pupils operate, how to find the best methods of teaching, how the Church is organized, and what it teaches. The value of a training course as compared with that of other means of preparation is twofold.

First, it provides a careful study of each specific phase of the work; and, second, it provides for a continuous and related study over a sufficiently long period

of time to enable the worker to become fairly well equipped mentally for the great task of teaching boys and girls and training them in Christian living.

There are two reasons why study must be pursued by the Sunday school worker. One was presented in an earlier chapter as the purpose to enrich, improve, and deepen the Sunday school worker's own religious experience. The other reason is that the Sunday school worker must study for the task of guiding and assisting in the forming of the character of those who have been placed under his care.

Let us close the thought of this chapter by again repeating the words of the great apostle to the early Christians, and may it become the motto and the ambition of every Sunday school worker:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."¹

¹2 Timothy 2: 15. (King James Version.)

CHAPTER VI

THE WORKER HIMSELF

(CONTINUED)

MAN A SOCIAL BEING

MAN is by nature a social creature. He craves and needs the associations of his fellows. It is this quality of human life that makes it possible for us to have organized society. Our clubs, lodges, Churches, villages, towns, and cities are all made possible because human beings naturally love to associate together in social groups. Every member of the social group, by reason of his membership in it, exercises a certain influence upon all the other members. There is nothing going on about us—no birth nor death, no blessing nor calamity, no deed of virtue or of vice—but that brings its living influence to each of us. The influence of every single member of the group will have its power for good or evil and will be woven into the character of the other members of the group whether they are conscious of it or not.

For a good many centuries, men thought of Christianity as having nothing to do with the social group, but only with each individual and his personal relation to God. But as we have come to a better appreciation of life and to understand more perfectly the teachings of Jesus and the purpose of Christianity, we realize that a man cannot develop his full nature all by himself apart from his fellows; neither can he be in right

relation with God unless he is in right relation with his fellow man. This brings to us an entirely new interpretation of the religious life, that God is the Father of all people and that we all belong to the family of God. This makes it necessary that the Christian worker must have a Christlike attitude toward all other people. He will not be able to hold ill will or to entertain bad feelings toward anyone. There must be no prejudices or jealousies in his heart and, because all other people are children of a common Heavenly Father, the Christian worker must be interested in their welfare.

The Christian worker must not only have the right spirit in his heart toward other people, but he must also have a right attitude toward all moral questions. No one can be of real value as a Sunday school worker if his position on moral questions is not in harmony with the spirit and teachings of Jesus. It will not be possible to teach younger persons to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" if one is in the habit of using the day for transacting ordinary business or if he breaks the Sabbath by slipping away for an occasional hunt or fish or if he indulges in such means of recreation and social life as are not suitable for the Sabbath. The only way by which one may successfully teach others to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy is to remember it himself and keep it holy.

In all of our public schools and Sunday schools, we are trying to teach the growing generation to obey the laws of the land, but one cannot successfully do this if he is guilty of violating any of those laws. One of

the most contemptible things in our present-day life is the sight of persons who talk very loudly in favor of prohibition but who on the sly buy and drink bootleg liquor and then laugh about it. Whoever is guilty of doing this is himself a lawbreaker.

These two illustrations very clearly point out the necessity for the Sunday school worker to live every day in the week in such a way that what he teaches on Sunday will have the backing of his own life. Too often it is true that the way Sunday school workers live through the week speaks so loudly that pupils cannot hear what they say on Sunday. Pupils are very quick to discover whether or not the daily conduct of the teacher is in keeping with what he says in the Sunday school lesson.

SYMPATHY

The holding of right attitudes toward other people will not be enough. To this must be added real sincere Christian sympathy for what they are doing. This is one of the finest qualities of the Christian life. It is the real outreach of one heart to another; our word "sympathy" comes from Greek words which mean to "suffer with." It was one of the very noticable characteristics of Jesus while he lived among men. He could never turn away from human need in any form. As he passed along the way, he seemed always to be looking for some one who was in distress. His whole life was filled with the task of healing the lame, of restoring the sight to the blind, of reaching out his hand to cool the fevered brow, and of speaking words

of comfort to all who were in distress. He was never harsh with anyone except with the Pharisees, who were the hypocrites of his day; and then he rebuked them because they pretended to be what they were not.

We must draw a distinction between sympathy and pity. To witness suffering and merely be sorry for people is not enough. Pity must ripen into a sympathy that will move the Christian to share in the sorrow and burden of those who are in need. It is through those who have been called to Christian service that the compassion of Christ must be revealed. Through his followers the love and sympathy of Christ will bring comfort and cheer to those who are sorrowing or in distress.

COMPANIONSHIP

Society is often spoken of as though it were an evil thing, and every form of pleasure is too often referred to as being worldly. Pleasure is not evil in itself. It is just what folk make it. It is good or bad according to the kind of leadership that is exercised in the social group. Christians have been sent forth into the world to create a Christian society—that is, to exercise such an influence in the life of the community that all of its pleasures, its business, and other relationships, shall be brought under the control of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Jesus loved folks. He loved to be with folks. His first public appearance after his baptism and temptation was at a social gathering. Some friends of his were to be married, and Jesus and his mother were invited as guests of the occasion,

and they were present. He was not only there, but he took a very active part in the wedding feast. So it is right and proper that Christians should enter into the social life of the community and by their presence and influence make these gatherings what they ought to be.

For too many years the Christian Church has been turning all the social life of the community over to those persons who are not primarily interested in character building. Jesus entered into the social life of his day in the same spirit in which he healed the sick and taught in the synagogue. He could not do otherwise, for he was interested in all the needs of human life. Just as the physical nature grows hungry and calls for bread, so the social nature of man grows hungry and calls for sympathy, love, and fellowship, and it is just as much the duty of the Church to feed this hunger as it is to feed the mind or the body. Throughout all our country, and especially in the small towns and the open places, little or no attention is given by Christian people and by the Church to the social needs of its young people. As a result, the young people have turned to the dance and questionable parties in search of amusement and recreation to meet their social needs. The Church and its leaders are to blame far more than are the young people themselves. For this reason they ought not to speak too critically of such forms of social life until some provision is made by the Church for ministering to this need.

The Church ought to be the social as well as the religious and moral center of every community. When-

ever we understand and fully appreciate that life is a unity, Christian workers will begin to support a program in the Church that will provide for a clean, wholesome social and recreational life. Whenever the Church sets itself off on one side of the community, closes its doors through all the week days, and makes no attempt to provide a social and recreational program for the young people of the community, that minute the Church is shutting itself off from vital contact with and influence over the youth of the community. It is also responsible for drawing a sharp line of distinction between the social and religious nature of persons which does not actually exist. One's religious nature as well as his social nature goes to a party, and one's social nature as well as his spiritual nature goes to Church. The fullest and best development of both of these qualities of life is necessary for the full-rounded character. It is just as important that the Sunday school workers should provide wholesome and clean social and recreational life as it is for them to provide proper lesson study. As soon as the Church and her leaders come to realize this and make provision for it, so soon will the Church begin to claim the affection of her young people and to enlist their services for the highest and best things in life. Our social nature is given to us by the same God who gave us our physical, mental, and religious natures, and its development along right lines is just as necessary for the full-rounded character as the development of our other powers that come from God.

Many centuries ago there grew up in the Catholic Church the idea that for one to be religious he had to

abuse his body, and men went so far as almost to starve themselves in an effort to become pious. Early in the history of our own country the Puritans came with the idea that man's social nature ought to be punished. With them the black clothes, the high, stiff hat, and the long face were signs of godliness. To smile was the sign of evil thoughts, and to laugh was a sin. Both of these ideas have been discarded, for we have come to discover that they are not essential to the religion of Jesus.

It is not within the province of this text to discuss forms and methods for taking care of the social and recreational needs, but only to call out the fact that man does have a social nature, that he has social needs which were God given, and that the Church and Christian leadership must make suitable provision for meeting these needs as a part of the whole task. In the early days of our life in America, these social needs were largely taken care of by the all-day meetings and the old-time camp meeting. Such meetings, held under Christian influence, called the entire community together, and the social hunger was fed. Life in the small community is at very best a dull and unattractive thing. This fact is being driven home to us by the way in which young people are leaving our small communities by the thousands and drifting into the larger communities and cities. If the adult leaders in the small Church could realize the importance of the social element in the life of youth and provide a real social and recreational program with the Church as its center, it would do very much toward holding youth to the

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small towns and country. If the Church is to continue its existence in the small community, it must provide a program to meet all the needs of life. This means, also, that the Christian worker must cultivate his social side as much as he can.

SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT

What do we mean by spiritual equipment? Is it some mysterious gift handed down to us from heaven, or is it a quality of life that is acquired through the years of effort to live the Christian life? The Sunday school worker who is "thoroughly furnished" for his task will be physically, mentally, and socially equipped. But it is not to be forgotten he will need also the "indwelling spirit of Christ."

In speaking of his own accomplishments as a Christian worker, Paul said: "Nevertheless, it is not I, but Christ that liveth in me." To him it was the "indwelling Christ" who furnished the power or spiritual equipment that was necessary for his success. The securing of spiritual equipment does not imply that there is some separate faculty in life that may be trained, but that all of one's powers and faculties are to be brought into harmony with the will and purpose of God. Such an equipment will of necessity call for

A DEFINITE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

This does not mean that such an experience is to be of some particular type or is to be secured in some particular way, time, or place. A religious experience may be like that of Saul of Tarsus, who was halted on

the way to Damascus to persecute Christians and stricken with a great blindness. Or again it may come in the form of a conversion in terms of conduct as in the case of Zacchæus, who had been morally a very clean man but as a taxgatherer was robbing the people; or it may come like the experience of Nicodemus, which was in the nature of a new birth. It will be remembered that Nicodemus was well versed in the law of the Jews and was depending upon the knowledge of the law to save him, and Jesus told him he would need to be born from above. Again, the experience may come like that of Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart, already warm, received the challenging message of the gospel gladly; or it may be like that of Timothy, who, because of the influence and teaching of his parents, had from his youth been growing in the knowledge of God; or it may be an experience like that of John Wesley, whose heart was strangely warmed as he sat in a Moravian prayer meeting. It will make no difference as to the time or place or nature of the experience. The thing of importance is that the Sunday school worker must for himself have a definite personal conscious experience of acceptance and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Religion is not a creed or a belief. It is an experience. The Christian religion is such an experience of Christ in one's own soul, and it cannot be shared with others when one does not have it for himself. If religion were merely a matter of intellect or of knowledge, it might be easily taught by the skeptic as well as the Christian, but since it is an

experience, something more than intellect is involved. The teaching of religion is the sharing of experience.

Religion does not consist entirely of a creed, a belief, or a statement of faith. It is, first of all, an experience of God in the soul, and the Christian religion is an experience of God as he has been revealed to him through Jesus Christ. Religion, therefore, cannot be shared or imparted to others unless one is in possession of a religious experience. Information and knowledge about religion, about God, about the Bible, may all be good, but the religion that counts is the religion of experience. If religion were merely a matter of knowledge, as we have said, it could easily be taught by the skeptic or nonbeliever; but since to Christians it is understood as an experience, it involves more than knowing. The religious experience that will count most in influencing the lives of others and in forming character is not one that is always being talked about at prayer meeting and during the revival, but it is the experience that proves its worth in everyday life and conversation. So effective is the power of a religious experience that the Christian worker needs always to be on his guard that he says or does nothing that will be contrary to the experience that he professes.

CAREFUL OF CONVERSATION

Some things will help one to become spiritually fit for real service while other things will destroy such usefulness. Paul had this in mind when he advised early Christians to bridle their tongues, by which he meant that they were to be careful how they talked

and what they said. The spoken word that falls on the ear of another can never be brought back. Sometimes in anger or in an ugly mood words of unkindness and criticism are spoken about other persons that sink deep into the heart, and many times do permanent injury. One may be ever so sorry for having spoken hastily and undertake to make ample apology, but no power on earth can bring our words back to us and undo their harm once they have been spoken. One of the most injurious of practices among Christians, and one that destroys their own deep spiritual life, is to engage in gossip or in the repeating of rumors that we hear about other folk. Many lives have been completely wrecked by a false report that has been circulated from one to another until a reputation is ruined. Christian workers should never be guilty of taking part in such gossip or passing on such rumors.

Not only should the Sunday school worker avoid being a gossiping talebearer, but he should avoid the use of language and words that are not proper. Jokes and yarns that are smutty and vulgar should never pass the lips of a Christian; surely they should never be told in the presence of younger persons. The Christian should not only refuse to repeat stories and jokes that contain immoral and vulgar suggestions, but he should never show his approval by laughter and enjoyment when they are told by another. The influence of many an otherwise good man is oftentimes destroyed by his frequent use of immoral, suggestive, and vulgar stories. It should be remembered that words are the index of thought, and that out of the abundance

of heart the mouth speaketh. Sometimes one can hardly avoid hearing evil words and smutty stories, but he can certainly prevent them from taking lodgment in his mind and from repeating them to others. A good motto for the Christian should be: "Do no evil, think no evil, speak no evil."

By doing the things that ought to be done and leaving undone those things that ought to be omitted, the Sunday school worker may so prepare himself spiritually as to become a power for good in his Church and community. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We would like to add as a kind of interpretation: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they will be pure of speech, and no words of poison will pass their lips." Of what profit will it be to the Sunday school worker to appear physically strong, mentally alert, and socially fit, if he is lacking in that richness of spirit that comes from communion and fellowship with Jesus Christ?

Now abideth physical, mental, social, and spiritual fitness, but the last of these is the greatest.

CHAPTER VII

AIDS TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH

IN the preceding chapters of this book, emphasis has been laid repeatedly upon the importance of preparation for Christian service and the personal qualities that are essential to success. It is only the growing life that is fruitful. Ripe fruit is never gathered from dead branches. Every farmer, gardener, and orchardist knows full well that there are certain things necessary for the growth of his crops. He may have ever so good a supply of seed but, unless he has moisture, sunshine, fertile soil, and proper cultivation there is no golden harvest. If any one of these elements is lacking, the crop will be injured, if not altogether lost. So it is in Christian work, the elements that make for Christian living must be combined in proper proportion if there is to be a fruitful life. In this chapter, we are to consider some of the elements that are necessary for the preparation of the personal life of those who are to serve as officers and teachers in the Church school.

STUDY

The growing grain or cotton or the tree in the orchard send their roots down into fertile soil in order that they may gather nourishment out of which to make the leaf and branch, the flower, or grain, or fruit. So the Christian who is to be productive must by means of study send the roots of his mind down into the soil of knowledge and draw therefrom those things which

have been found by experience to contain spiritual values. When one searches for knowledge that will feed the spiritual nature, he soon discovers that his most inexhaustible source of supply will be found in the Bible. Here he will find the record of the experience of a peculiar people known to us as the Hebrews; also the story of the early Christians who strove to find and to understand God and to interpret the meaning of life. It is by all means the best book of religious experience that the human race has ever known.

In the Old Testament, we discover a record of how in the long ago great and good men discovered that there was but one God, and him they called Jehovah. They also came to discover that this God was the source of all light and life, and that, as is given in the Genesis record, he was the Creator of everything in our universe, the heavens above and the earth below, and every living creature, and all that is on this planet of ours. As time went by they discovered that God was more than a Creator. In their experience of him they found that he was good, that he was just, that he was merciful, that he was ethical, and that he was the source of love. As men discovered these things about God, they told their experiences to others, and for generation after generation these experiences were repeated in story form so that their children and their children's children might know of their discovery. Finally, good and wise men, writing under divine inspiration, made a record of these experiences and joined them with their own experiences, and the preservation of these experiences of God by men of ancient times, as we now have them

in our Old Testament, has been for centuries one of the richest inheritances of mankind. As we read through our records, we discover that these early writers did not know much about science. They thought that they lived on a flat earth, and that a brazen dome surrounded it; they had no idea that it was a rapidly whirling body, moving entirely around the great sun center of our universe once each year.

But while they knew little of science, they knew much of God. Man discovered God long before he discovered how God does his wonderful work. They did discover that he was the Creator of everything, and that it was by his will that the universe was preserved; and they discovered more than this—that is, that he was *the source of their own spiritual natures*. This is what is meant when the Scripture says that we are created in the image of God. God is a spirit, and he has created us spirits like unto himself. They came to know God and to worship him with the best light of their day. As we look through these records, we have to admit that these people did strange things in the name of religion; but they did one of the greatest things that was ever done for the human race when they discovered, and left the record of their discovery for us, that there was but *one true and living God*.

Because of the record of this discovery, if for no other reason, the Old Testament section of our Bible furnishes a rich field for our study. If we diligently study its messages, we will gain knowledge of the great moral and ethical codes of human life and will get some idea of the history of this peculiar people who, of all the

ancient peoples, came best to know and understand God. In its proverbs and poetry, there is material upon which our spiritual nature may feed, and the message of the prophets will reveal to us our duty to God and to our fellow man.

And what shall we say as to the value of that other part of our Bible, the New Testament? For the Christian worker there is no other literature which contains so much that is of value. It is the record of the life, the deeds, and the teachings of the Founder of our Christian faith. The age-long search for God is fully satisfied in the revelation of himself in Jesus Christ, and in the Son will all our needs be met.

If we had only a single one of the four Gospels for our sacred Book, there would be enough of richness to make saints out of all who studied its pages and lived up to the teachings there revealed. The New Testament not only records the life and teachings of Jesus, but it gives us the history of the beginnings of Christianity. It reveals the experiences of those who strove during the first century to spread the gospel message throughout a heathen world. There is contained in the New Testament such a wealth of material that one may study for a lifetime and each new day obtain fresh information and clearer revelation.

There are a good many people in these days who are very much concerned for fear that scholarship and scientific discovery will destroy our Bible and take it from us. But there can be no danger at this point, for real scholarship and real scientific investigation are but the efforts of honest men to discover truth, and, since

all truth is God's truth, it can never destroy our Bible. No, our danger of losing the Bible does not lie in too much study or too much scholarship, but in too much *neglect* in the matter of studying its pages and searching for its truth. It is only those who are ignorant of the teachings of the Gospels and who neglect to read and study who are in danger of losing their Bibles. Our real trouble is not that the Bible is being lost, but that people are being lost to the Bible. The Christian worker who is to be a fruit bearer must diligently search the Scriptures. It is only by study that he can get for himself and for others that knowledge which will lead to an understanding of truth.

CHURCH HISTORY

The written record, as we have it in our English Bible, was finished nearly eighteen centuries ago, but through all of this time Christian men and women have been living and experiencing God; they have left for us their testimony, all of which will add to our store of knowledge as Christian teachers. Every one should know something of the history of the great Christian Church, of how Protestantism came into being, and something of his own branch of the larger Christian Church. The Christian worker should be familiar with the teachings and the form of organization of the Church to which he belongs. He should know why we are Protestants and not Catholics or Jews; he should understand why we are Methodists and not Baptists, Presbyterians, or members of some other great Christian body. To belong to any Church, and to be working there

because of family inheritance, or prejudice, or tradition is not enough. If one is to render his best service as an officer or teacher in the Sunday school, he must know something about the great movements of Christianity and of the great men and women who have carried forward the program of the kingdom. We have quoted above the words of the great apostle to the Gentile world: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."¹ According to this statement of his, the Christian ought to study in order to meet with the approval of God. Such arduous work is necessary if he would rightly interpret the Scriptures. There are so many fields of knowledge that are available to the Christian worker of to-day. We have the Old Testament, the New Testament, nineteen centuries of history of the Christian Church, the history of our own Church with its great doctrines and teachings, the biography of great religious teachers and leaders, including the world's great missionary leaders; besides, we have a great wealth of Christian truth found in hymns, in poetry, and other literature, all of which furnish rich soil for Christian nurture.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

Rich soil alone will not guarantee the growth of abundant crops. Other things are needed. There must be rain and sunshine to make the seed germinate and grow. So in the preparation of oneself for fruitful service the securing of knowledge alone will not be

¹2 Timothy 2: 15. (King James Version.)

sufficient. It will be necessary, just as fertile soil is necessary to the crop, but to this soil of knowledge there must be added the elements of prayer and meditation in order that the knowledge gained by the worker may be used in the nurture of his own spiritual life.

Prayer has many functions, and it is defined in many ways; but for the Christian worker its chief value lies in the enrichment of life that comes from "communion with God." Prayer is the way by which the individual may come into intimate relation with him in whom we move and have our being and in whose name we serve. Too often the prayers of Christians are one-sided. People spend all of their time in prayer in telling God what they want him to do for them or for others, or they spend their time in expressing praise, gratitude, thanksgiving for his many mercies and blessings; but for one to have communion or conversation with another, two parties must be engaged. Such prayers are often much like the giving of an order for groceries or other supplies from the store. A list of one's wants are made known, and there the matter rests, and we expect God to fill the order. What Christians need to cultivate in their prayer life is the habit of listening so that God may speak to them. Our Old Testament record tells us of how men went apart from the rush and noise of the world in which they lived, out into the desert or up into the mountain and listened to the voice of God. In those days God communed with prophets and wise men. They heard his voice and went forth to deliver his message; but God is willing to talk with people to-day as much as he ever was. What

Christians need to do is to shut themselves off from the busy life they lead and hear his voice. By prayer and meditation the Christian will be able to enrich his knowledge and illumine his mind so that his life may become fruitful in just the same way as the warm sunshine prepares soil for the sprouting grain.

“Prayer is a Christian’s strength,
His very breath and being.”

Every pastor who really feeds his people, and who is a spiritual power in his pulpit, always seeks a little while alone with God before trying to bring a message to his people. In going to his knees in prayer, he seeks that guidance and illumination which in his own strength he could not have. Just so the Sunday school superintendent should never come to his task on Sunday morning, nor should the teacher presume to stand before his class to impart messages of eternal truth without first visiting the place of divine communion. Here is the opportunity for that quiet fellowship with God which will furnish strength for any task and will supply the courage which puts fear to rout and gives the calm assurance of divine help and counsel.

The Christian is robbing himself of one of his richest blessings when he denies himself the privilege of frequent conversation with his Maker. Prayer has been discovered to be the best means of cultivating fellowship with God. In all the ages past, and among all races of people, men have found in prayer a never-failing source of strength and comfort. Many times Jesus withdrew from the crowd, and even from the

small circle of his disciples, and spent long hours in quiet conversation with his Father. If this communion with God was necessary in the life of Jesus, how much more is it necessary in the life of the average Christian.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER AND HIS CHURCH

It is the purpose of the Church to prove a means of grace to all who enter its doors and take part in its services. The Church may not be all that it ought to be, but it is an institution that has been divinely established for the promotion of worship, for the preaching of the gospel of Christ, the conversion of sinners, the development of Christian fellowship, and for the teaching and training of its members in the art of Christian living. Those persons who have been selected to be officers and teachers in the Sunday school stand greatly in need of the blessings that come from participation in the worship and preaching services of the Church.

It is often emphasized that the Sunday school is not an agency separate and distinct from the Church, but that it is the Church engaged in its teaching work. This is true, but it does not mean that the Sunday school, as the teaching agency of the Church, constitutes the whole program of the Church, and that because we have attended the Sunday school service we have performed our duty to the Church. When one takes his stand in front of some of our churches in the small town and in our cities on Sunday morning at about the eleven o'clock hour, he will be impressed with the fact that there seems to be two separate and distinct

services being held on Sunday morning in our Protestant Churches. He will see one procession of people on their way to the church for the preaching and worship service; he will see another large group of people walking in another direction away from the church. If you should inquire of those who are leaving as to why they are going away from the preaching service, they will try to justify themselves by saying: "We have already been to church; the Sunday school hour is over."

No member of the Church ought to take this position, and no officer or teacher in the Sunday school should ever be guilty of such a practice. During the period of the Sunday school, we are in attendance upon a part of the service in which the officers and teachers have been giving out to others, expending their mental and spiritual resources, and those who are there as pupils will have been engaged in the study of religious truths. But both of these groups will need the experience of the preaching and worship hour for the complete enrichment of their lives. The practice of leaving after the Sunday school hour is not only depriving the Sunday school worker of the benefits that come from the worship service and the message of the minister, but by his example he is saying to the boys and girls, the young men and young women, who see him going away, that the worship and preaching services of the Church are not of very great worth. In fact, the Sunday school worker who leaves at the close of the Sunday school hour, unless because of

some unavoidable reason, is helping to educate the growing generation away from the Church, when his whole effort should be to educate them toward the Church.

It makes no difference whether or not we like the preacher, or the music, or the order of service, or some of the Church officials. The Church does not belong to them any more than it does to all the rest, and no matter who may be the preacher, or who may render their service in the Church, whenever we enter the door of the church for worship we will receive a blessing for our lives if our own hearts and attitudes are right. Anyone who cannot be loyal to the whole program of his Church, and attend with reasonable regularity upon the worship and preaching services, should not be permitted to occupy so important a place as that of officer or teacher in the Sunday school.

And what we have been saying here with reference to the attendance of the officers and teachers in the Sunday school upon the preaching and worship service of the Church may also well be said of the members of adult Bible classes. No attendance upon the sessions of a Bible class will give to the adult all that is needed for the building up of his spiritual life. The Bible class must never become a substitute for the preaching service. There are values in the preaching of the Word, in the singing of hymns, and in the Scripture reading in the service of public worship that can never be gotten in the average Bible class. Here again the matter of example that is being set for the children and young people is very important. And still again,

the presence and participation of the adult members of the Church is needed in the service of public worship.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Sunday school worker should at all times be present and partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As an aid to his spiritual development, there is no service in the Church that will be of greater value. This is the great memorial of the life and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was among the last of the requests that he made of his disciples, that they should engage in this beautiful service as oft as they would in remembrance of him. As an aid to the personal enrichment of the Christian life, the Lord's Supper is of unusual worth. It is a symbol of our spiritual communion with Christ. It also becomes a bond of union among Christian workers. It is a service in which the Christian may in a very real sense enjoy the personal fellowship of the spirit of Christ, and it is this personal fellowship that is so needful in our busy lives. Unless we partake of his spirit, we have no fellowship with him in this institution that we call the Church. The Lord's Supper was instituted by him as a means whereby he might share this fellowship with us in the most intimate way.

St. Paul in writing of the Lord's Supper said that it was a time of testing for a Christian and a time when he could measure his life by the standards in the life of Christ. In the practice of the modern Church, it has also become a time of reconsecration; a reconsecration to one's highest ideals and to the task of living

the Christian life. The Christian who fails regularly to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper is allowing his soul to be lean when it might be rich in spirit. Through the centuries this beautiful service has proved to be a source of spiritual strength to all who approach the Lord's table with reverent and prayerful hearts.

This, then, is the soil into which the Christian ought to send the roots of his life from week to week and month to month as he searches the Scripture, communes with the Heavenly Father, attends upon the public services of the Church, and partakes of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Thus it will be that the Christian life will bear a rich and abundant harvest.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WORKER AND HIS COLABORERS

RELIGION AN EVERYDAY BUSINESS

MANY years ago there grew up an idea among some in the Christian Church that for one to be a real Christian he must separate himself from all contact with the affairs of this world and from the mass of the common people. When such persons set themselves to the business of being religious they at once looked about for a place of seclusion; with this in mind, they went out into the desert places and away back into the mountain recesses and built monasteries, surrounding them with great walls so that no one from the outside could defile the place with his presence unless he came to join the company of those bound by solemn oath to live the solitary life in accord with the ideals they had set up. In these monasteries men were prepared for the special service of the Church; here monks and priests were trained whose business it was to administer the sacraments of the Church and forgive the sins of the people. This is how it happened that very sharp lines were drawn between things that were secular and things that were sacred, things that were spiritual and things that pertained to the world. Any man who wanted to be counted a good Christian found it necessary to shut himself off from every one else and spend the most of his time in fasting and prayer.

HIS LIFE AND WORK

This all seems very strange to us now. No longer do our preachers seclude themselves in desert places or in the secret rooms behind the church, but they live and associate with other people just like ordinary human beings. This is because our idea of what it means to be religious has changed. We have come to know that the religious life must be lived every day in the year and carried with us wherever we go. We have also come to discover that if we are to do any good in the world it must be done in our association and contact with other people. So, when the Sunday school worker thinks of the task that has been set before him he must remember that the work he is doing is in close relation with everything else that is going on about him, and that every day and every hour of his life spent in vital contact with other persons is influencing them in the making of some sort of character. He must also remember that the Sunday school pupils who come to his class Sunday mornings or who come into his home at any time during the week are being influenced by all the people who touch their lives from day to day. He must also remember that his success as a Sunday school worker will depend not only upon how well he may prepare or teach a lesson, or how well he may perform any other duties as an officer in the Sunday school on Sunday, but also upon what he does as an individual throughout the entire week.

LIFE IS A UNIT

Another strange idea that was held at one time by many people (and that not so many years ago) was

that the life of every individual was divided into several compartments. In other words, they thought that one part of a boy might be engaged in study, another part engaged in play, and still another in the activities of Sunday school. This meant that only his religious nature was dealt with in Sunday school. But as we have come to study life more carefully, we have found out how badly mistaken this idea was. We have discovered that the *whole* boy is engaged at study or at play; and that when he comes to the Sunday school the *whole boy* is there. He is there with his likes and dislikes, his intellect and his feelings, his habits and his will. *If he is there at all, he is all there.* When we understand this, it will make a great deal of difference as to what is the real nature of our task. Convention speakers used to grow eloquent in picturing the opportunity of the Sunday school officer or teacher. In glowing words they described the pupil in the Sunday school class as an empty jug which had been sent to us on Sunday morning all dressed up and with shiny face; they told us that it was the privilege of the Sunday school teacher to fill him full of religious knowledge. Or, again, they spoke of this Sunday school pupil as "putty" or "clay" placed in the hands of the teacher and molded at her will. Still again he was referred to as a block of marble to be carved according to some beautiful Christian design.

Now, this was all very fine as a subject for a speech, but the trouble with it was it was not true, for those pupils who come to us on Sunday morning are not

jugs that are empty, nor putty or clay that is pliable, nor cold, lifeless blocks of marble to be carved.

These pupils come to us out of a very busy life. They are the same individuals who were in the school-room on Friday, who spent that night at home, and were on the playground Saturday afternoon. Their lives are full to overflowing. They have wills of their own, a thing which keeps them from being putty or clay; and as to being cold and lifeless blocks of marble to be fashioned according to our opinions, they are more like the steam engine or electric dynamo.

HOW CHARACTER IS FORMED

We might say that our pupils grow from within outward like the great tree in the forest or the sapling we see on the hillside. No one ever thinks of tacking on round upon round of bark upon a tree, splicing the roots or adding limbs to make it grow taller or to reach out further. We know better than to do this. We know that its roots push down deep into the earth and drink up rich elements of the soil and send this up countless tiny fibers with the sap, and as it flows out to the end of the branches the air and sunshine transform it into growing leaf and limb. As the years go by the roots grow deeper and the branches push up and out.

Thus it is with the life of boys and girls. It is a mysterious force within that lays hold of the food that is placed within reach of the body and transforms it into bone and tissue and makes the body grow. Again, it is a mysterious force that lays hold of new ideals, emotions, and other materials upon which the

spiritual nature can feed, and, behold, we see character growing richer and finer as the days come and go. It is not a process of tacking on or adding to, but a process of feeding by which the physical, mental, social, and spiritual nature all together make up life as it grows and matures.

HELPING TO FORM CHARACTER

Our specific task, then, is one of assisting others to grow into the right kind of life. In this work of ours we must remember that there are many other persons and agencies of our pupils touching the lives as truly as we are, and affecting them radically for good or evil; for wherever he goes, to school, about the home or on the playground, his whole nature goes, and he is becoming a part of all that he meets. The truth is, that as religious workers we can do very little in affecting the life of the pupil unless we are able to secure the coöperation of other persons and agencies that are touching his life. We are doing our work through the channel of the Church or the Sunday school; but we must remember that the home, the public school, other Churches in the community, and even the community itself, are daily making some sort of contribution to the growing life of childhood and youth. We must also remember that while the Sunday school may not be the only agency in the community that is affecting the religious life of the pupil, it has been set aside as an institution particularly and specially suited for assisting religious growth and development. This constitutes its peculiar mission. The Church is the

only organized community agency that is devoting itself entirely to the task of developing religious persons, which is to say that it is the one big agency in the community that has been established for the purpose of building Christian character. Its success will depend largely upon how effectively the members of the Church do their work and to what extent they are able to secure the influence and help of all those other agencies that touch the lives of childhood and youth. Too often we seem to think that we need to be interested only in the souls of our pupils; but if life is a unity, we cannot separate the soul from the rest of the nature, and we must, therefore, be interested in his physical, mental, and social development as well as in his spiritual development.

ENLISTING THE HOME

This means, therefore, that as workers in the Church and Sunday school we must join hands with other workers—the fathers and mothers in the homes—if we are to be successful. The kind of a home from which a pupil comes will have very much to do with what he is. If the home is Christian, if the father and mother and other members of the family are leading sincere Christian lives, our task will be much easier and will become that of imparting religious knowledge and helping him to translate that knowledge into right living. On the other hand, if the home is not Christian and the members of the family do not lead the kind of lives that Christians should lead, the task is very difficult and

will require great skill and much patience in trying to overcome the example of the home.

Not only this, but whenever there comes to our class a pupil who is not from a home that is Christian, it becomes the responsibility of the school, and of the Sunday school teacher in whose class the pupil sits, to try at once to win that home to Christ and to the Christian religion. It is exceedingly difficult to cultivate and develop a spiritual nature in the environment of a home that is unchristian. If ever the time comes when the Church cannot count upon the support of Christian homes, its doom would be sealed. The home is and always will be the first and most important institution for promoting religion. The religious growth and training of the child cannot be separated from his home influences. An overwhelming majority of the best Christian men and women come from Christian homes, and if this institution fails in its task, to this extent will the work of the Church grow weak. How necessary, then, it is that the worker in the Church and Sunday school should recognize the place and influence of the home and parents that they may be our allies in the common task before us. Our program can never be complete until it makes very definite provision for enlisting the sympathy and coöperation of the home.

But how shall we do this? First, we might say that every member of every home represented in the membership of the Sunday school should be known to the officers and teachers of the school, and an honest and continued effort should be made to enlist them as members of the Sunday school and Church. Thus we

may render a real service to the pupil who is already in our schools. Abraham Lincoln said: "Our nation cannot endure half slave and half free." In like manner it is very hard for any home to remain half Christian and half non-Christian.

Not only should we make an effort to get the members of the families in our community to attend Church and Sunday school regularly, but the workers in the Church and Sunday school should regularly visit them so as to become better acquainted with the members of the home. It was in this way that the early Christians carried on their work. They had no Church organization such as we have to-day; but the Book of Acts tells us that they went about from house to house visiting and teaching in the homes. This is still one of the most effective ways by which the Church may extend its influence throughout the community. As it was then, so it is now, the best way to get people interested in our religion and in our Church is for us as Church workers to show our interest in them by visiting in the homes that are not related to the Church. However well the Sunday school worker may do his work on Sunday morning, it cannot amount to a great deal if the influence of the home from which the pupil comes is contrary to what the teacher is trying to do.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the importance of the home and its place of power and influence in the growing life of the child and youth. knowing the home and the home life of the pupils who attend our Sunday schools is as necessary as any phase of our work, and to fail in this is too often to fail in

winning the pupil to the Christian life. There are very few parents who are not interested at heart when we talk with them about the religious life of their children, and for the most part real sympathy and coöperation can be secured if we get acquainted and let them know what it is we are trying to do for the ones whom they love.

Another very effective way to secure the coöperation of the home is by forming an association, composed of the parents whose children are in the Sunday school and the officers and teachers of the Sunday school. Frequent meetings of such a group of people will result in a mutual understanding between the school and the home and in a closer coöperation in the religious education of the children in our Sunday schools.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Next to the home in importance for the life of the growing child is the public school. In a democracy such as ours, we do not allow for definite religious teaching in the public school. It was not this way in the early days of our country, for at that time most of the reading matter that was studied by the pupils was religious and moral in its character; and the teachers of these schools were selected more on the basis of their Christian character than on the basis of scholarship. But in these days teachings about religion and God have been ruled out of the textbooks in our public schools, and, were it not for the fact that we still have thousands of Christian public school teachers, we should be in a very bad situation indeed. Our oppor-

tunity, therefore, to coöperate with the public school lies at the point of taking a definite interest in the men who are on our school boards and the teachers who are selected by them to teach our schools. So much depends upon the character of the teacher, whether in the public school or in the Sunday school. If she is a giddy, timeserving flapper, teaching in our public school only that she may thereby draw a salary and spend it upon her empty and senseless frivolity, the public school where she teaches may become a menace to the moral and religious life of the childhood of that community. On the other hand, if she is a real teacher, one who is interested in the full-rounded development of the character of her pupils; if she leads an upright, moral, and Christian life, her worth to the community cannot be estimated in money values. The shame of almost every small community in America is that too often the service of a faithful teacher is little appreciated and the salaries are so small that they can scarcely live on them. It is a serious matter, one in which every Christian parent in the Christian Church should be deeply interested, this matter of the teachers in our public schools. Five days in the week for several months each year, these children from our homes, these Sunday school pupils of ours, are under the influence and training of the public school teacher. If this influence is exercised along the line of high ideals and noble living, the pupils are as truly being developed in Christian character as they are in Sunday school. But if the public school teacher scoffs at religion, or in her way of living stands for low ideals and moral

conduct, it becomes exceedingly difficult for the Sunday school teacher to overcome this influence. Christian parents of the Christian Church are, therefore, within their rights when they take a very vital interest in the selection of those persons whose influence is to count for so much in the lives of her pupils. Not that we are to insist that these teachers shall be members of some one of the denomination which meets our preference, but that they shall be of unquestioned Christian character; and it is fully justifiable to ask that during their stay in the community they shall identify themselves with some Church in that community as an officer or teacher in the Sunday school.

Fortunate indeed is that community and those Churches where the teachers in the public schools are also teachers in the Sunday schools. We sometimes hear it said by our public school teachers that they have to worry all the week with children in their schoolroom and they do not want to be worried on Sunday. Such an attitude is not worthy of the best ideals of a real teacher. Her skill and training that is utilized five days in the week in guiding the youth in history, in mathematics, and in science, should also be dedicated to Christian service on Sunday. The Sunday service will offer the best opportunity that the public school teacher has of furnishing an example and giving definite religious ideals and instruction to her pupils.

Not only should the Church be interested in the selection of the public school teachers, but every Christian worker owes it to those who are his co-

laborers to give them a real place of service in the Church. He should seek the advice and counsel of those who have been specially trained in the art of teaching. The special training in education and the careful study given to the laws of learning will enable the public school teacher to render a valuable service to those who are working in the Sunday school and who have not had this opportunity for special training. They should freely render such a service, and the Sunday school should seek after it. What we need to do is to make the public school an ally of the Church in the effort to develop Christian character in the boys and girls of the community. If the Church can secure the coöperation of the home and school, and with them join hands in a united and intelligent effort on behalf of the boys and girls of any community, real progress can be made; but if each of these three great institutions goes its own separate way, disregarding the existence of the other, knowing nothing about what the other is trying to do; of each demands the attention and time of the child for separate and unrelated periods, the character of a child in such a community will suffer serious loss. The whole child is in the home, the whole child goes to school, and to Sunday school, and whenever and wherever his moral and religious welfare is neglected his whole life suffers.

But there are other influences in community life that affect the character of our pupils, and in these Christian workers must also be interested along with the parents and public school teachers.

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL INFLUENCES

As the whole child goes to the school and to Sunday school, so the whole child goes to the circus and the movies, the playground, and the party, and his character is helped or damaged according to the influences that are exercised by these agencies. It is here that the religious ideals are to be tested out or expressed in actual conduct, and the wise Sunday school teacher will use this means of helping his pupils to carry into the everyday life, into social and recreational activities, the religious and moral truths that have been taught in the Sunday school lesson. In fact, it has been discovered that no Sunday school lesson is ever learned until it becomes a part of the regular work or play or social life of the pupil.

CHAPTER IX

THE PASTOR AND HIS HELPERS

THE PASTOR AS SPIRITUAL LEADER

THE pastor or minister of any Church is by virtue of the position he occupies also the pastor of the Sunday school, which means that, since he is the spiritual head of the whole Church, he is the spiritual head of all its parts. The Sunday school that is without the advice and counsel of a pastor is in a most unfortunate situation. It sometimes happens that a pastor will fail to realize his relation to the Sunday school and treat it with indifference or neglect. As a rule, the pastor will feel that he has a definite relation to and interest in the work of the school or schools that come under his pastoral supervision, and officers and teachers in these schools should always recognize that he does sustain this relation to them and to their work, and should confer often and freely with him about their work. The number of pastors who have a growing appreciation of the place and importance of Sunday school work and are showing an active and intelligent interest therein is rapidly increasing.

In many communities, it will be found that the idea has grown up that the Sunday school is an institution separate and apart from the Church, and by reason of this may not have the proper appreciation of the pastor. In such cases it is the duty of the pastor to assume in a tactful and firm way his rightful place

and give such advice and direction to the work as he may deem necessary. No pastor can neglect to establish his right relation to the Sunday school without injury to the work which has been committed to his hand and a loss in his own effectiveness. The pastor is a man with many duties. There are many calls upon his time and energy, and he must not be expected to devote all of his time to the Sunday school as some enthusiastic workers may insist. On the other hand, the multitude of his other duties must not cause him to omit the very large and important responsibility which he sustains to the educational side of his ministry.

There is an interesting record in the New Testament which tells of the time when Jesus asked Peter: "Peter, lovest thou me?" Three times in succession Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And the answer of Jesus indicates clearly how he expected Peter to prove his love. To the first answer, he replied: "Feed my lambs." To the second: "Tend my sheep." And to the third: "Feed my sheep."

From this first reply it seems that Jesus expected his disciples to prove their lasting affection for him by giving attention to children. The second answer pointed out the duty of his followers as being that of a shepherd looking over the whole flock. The third, that showed the one who loved him was to feed the older ones.

In looking over the whole of his task, the pastor will find that his Sunday school is but one of his responsibilities. But if he is wise he will appreciate the fact that it is one of his most important ones. The pastor

will not be expected to become an expert in any one phase of the Sunday school work unless it is in the matter of supervision or administration, but he must know as much about the whole work of the Sunday school as he knows about preaching or visiting. In fact, from the very nature of the case, he will need to give as much of his time and talent to a study of this task as he does to the preparation of his sermons.

There are at least five things that the pastor will need to know.

First, he will need to know people, for upon him will rest the responsibility of passing judgment upon the fitness of those who are to be his helpers in carrying on this work. In order that he may know them, it is necessary that he should be constantly studying them.

Second, he must know the laws that govern the growth of human life, for upon these laws will rest his whole plan of organizing the work of his school.

Third, he must know enough about the needs of growing childhood and youth to give proper direction in the selection of suitable lessons for their study and to suggest forms and materials of worship and the activities that will develop Christian character.

Fourth, he will need to know something about the proper methods of teaching. His relation to the school is that of a supervisor, and unless he knows these things he will not be able to render his best service.

Fifth, he should know the needs of the various groups in such a way as to be able to make the best use of the building and equipment that has been provided by the Church, and to give proper direction when changes are

to be made or new buildings are to be erected. He must be familiar enough with the work of the modern Sunday school to be able to assist in building up the weak places and developing the strong points in his school.

To sum it up in a sentence, the place of the pastor is that of a counselor, an adviser, a supervisor, or, as he is being called in many places, his own director of education in his Church.

THE PASTOR AS AN EXAMPLE

Since the pastor is the recognized leader, he must set an example before his officers and teachers that they can well afford to follow. It has sometimes happened that a pastor was heard to urge his officers and teachers to attend conventions or institutes, to read new books or to take units in the training course, while he did not seem to feel that a similar responsibility rests upon him. He should remember, however, that even though he is more or less familiar with what may be contained in the new books and magazines and training courses, it need not be beneath his dignity to say to his workers: "Come, let us do it together." If he is already informed, he will be able to make a very large contribution to his coworkers by reason of his knowledge. If he is not informed, his study of these matters with his workers will stimulate their interest and lead them by the very power of a good example into better preparation. No pastor can conscientiously insist upon his helpers paying the price of equipment when he is not willing to set the example.

Not only will he lead the way in the matter of larger preparation, but he will set the example in the matter of being present on time and all the time when he is within reach of the Sunday school session. The pastor who declines to attend the Sunday school session because he requires this hour for the preparation of his sermon is admitting to himself and to his people that he has not made sufficient preparation during the week. Besides he is "robbing Peter to pay Paul," and is losing his contact with the Sunday school in order to add a little to the eleven o'clock hour.

HIS SUNDAY MORNING DUTIES

While the pastor should be in the Sunday school session, it is not to be expected that he shall be given a regular task that will confine him to one class or duty. To do this is to prevent him from rendering his best service to the whole school. There may be times when, to meet an emergency, a pastor can render a very important service in substituting for the teacher of a class or in filling some other office, such as song leader, or even superintendent; but this should be looked upon as only a temporary arrangement. He should, however, have certain very definite relationships to the school, and whenever he is present they should be recognized by having him assist in the worship service, such as in the leading of the prayer, the reading of a passage of Scripture, leading of a responsive service, telling of a story, or occasionally making a talk upon some definite subject that is related to the worship service. This will help to hold

him up in the mind of the school as having a definite relationship to the whole organization. It will give him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the details of the work and will allow the pupils and teachers to come to know him as their pastor.

One of the best services that can be rendered by a pastor is to be present before the opening hour of the school and greet the pupils and teachers as they arrive. Nothing will establish a bond of fellowship between the pastor and the members of his Sunday school more quickly than the cheerful smile, the hearty "Good morning," and the warm handclasp; and nothing will stimulate the on-time attendance of the whole school in a better way than such a practice.

THE PASTOR AND HIS SUPERINTENDENT

The relation that exists between the pastor and the superintendent of the Sunday school should be most cordial. They share together a partnership responsibility for the most important task in the local Church. The pastor is in the position of a general in charge. The superintendent is his chief of staff, the principal executive officer.

Pastors come and go, but the superintendent is a permanent resident of the community. This does not mean that because the superintendent is a permanent resident that he should permanently occupy the position of superintendent. His term of office is for a year at a time only, but during that year it is a most responsible one. One of the weakest points in the average Sunday school is just here. A superintendent some-

times feels that by reason of long years of service the office comes to belong to him and takes offense when it is suggested that a younger or better-prepared man might render a larger service in the position. The pastor will find this one of the most difficult problems to meet in the average Sunday school, and it will require real Christian courage, tact, and common sense to deal with the problem of selecting the superintendent for the next year.

If the superintendent is not measuring up to these requirements that have been set out in the preceding chapters of this text, the pastor ought to assume the responsibility that rests upon him as the spiritual head of the Church and deal with the situation accordingly. If we can ever come to the point of dealing with the same honesty in the work of the Sunday school as is used in business, we shall have made a long forward step in building better Sunday schools. The personal desires of a superintendent should not prevail when they conflict with the needs of the pupils in the school. We realize that when it comes to selecting the lesson material the need of the pupil is the law of the school; so it is the need of the pupil that should determine the matter of electing or appointing the superintendent.

It is sometimes a very difficult thing to remove a man who has filled the position over a long term of years and who loves Sunday school work. Care should be taken that he is not unduly offended and that the matter is handled in such a way as to keep him in some effective relationship; but with the courage that be-

comes a Christian leader the pastor should not turn aside from his share of the responsibility in making a change when necessary. The pastor will want to confer with other members of the Church who have the interest of the children at heart, and when he decides upon a change, he will be entitled to the whole-hearted and loyal support of all the officers and teachers in the school.

The loyalty and devotion of officers and teachers and of the pupils should never attach to a particular person in such a way that loyalty to Christ and to the Church will be neglected. Is the Sunday school in a rut? Is it merely rocking along from month to month and year to year in the same old way? Is it failing to keep step with improvements that are made in the public schools and in the community at large? Is it losing its hold upon childhood and youth? If this is the condition, then no man has the moral right to retain continuously under such circumstances any office of responsibility; the pastor has upon him the moral obligation to make such changes as are necessary. A frank, open, face-to-face brotherly visit will usually help to clear matters up if the superintendent is a real Christian and has the work at heart. In undertaking to make such a change, care should be taken that the superintendent is not literally thrown out, but that he is retained to perform some other duty.

When once the superintendent has been chosen, during his entire time of office he has the right to expect the whole-hearted coöperation and assistance

of the pastor. They are in fact yoked up together with a common load to pull, and they should confer freely and often about their common task. If there is not the fullest sympathy and coöperation between these two persons, very little can be accomplished by the other workers. Upon their shoulders more largely than upon any others will rest the responsibility for the success or failure of the whole educational work in the local Church. Each should take the other into his fullest confidence; neither should make or announce plans involving the policies of the school without having previously conferred with and secured the consent of the other. This does not mean that the superintendent will be bothering the pastor with every little detail, but it will mean that he will keep the pastor fully advised so that the plans he makes for the Sunday school will not run in conflict with the plans of the pastor for the whole Church. It sometimes happens that the superintendent will be planning for a picnic during a certain week and at the same time the pastor is planning for some special series of services. Unless they keep each other informed, friction may easily develop. At certain stated periods each month, the pastor and superintendent will do well to go over the whole work of the Sunday school and prepare recommendations that are to be made to the Workers' Council or to the school.

THE PASTOR AND HIS TEACHERS

The pastor has many persons in the local Church with whom he is very closely related in an official

way, but with none of them should he be more closely related than to the teachers in his Sunday school. It is through these persons that he, as pastor and shepherd, is to carry on the great teaching work of his Church. Some of his official family will be concerned with the raising of the Church finances. Others will be looking after the upkeep of the building; but his Sunday school teachers are primarily concerned with forming character in the boys and girls of his Church and community. It will be necessary, therefore, for him to know each of these persons intimately, to know of their several abilities, to know something of their home life, something of the quality of their religious experience, and to render service whenever possible in helping them to equip themselves for better work. Frequent visits in the homes of the officers and teachers will be necessary in order to establish that bond of sympathy and mutual helpfulness that will enable him to assist in solving their problems.

Through these persons the pastor will be able to watch closely the unfolding spiritual life of the boys and girls of his Church and to assist them in their efforts to lead the pupils to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ.

TRAINING HIS HELPERS

The wise pastor will discover that possibly the very best service that he can render to the Sunday school and to his officers and teachers will be in the way of leading study groups and training classes. As the spiritual head of the school, his leadership in training will be natural and expected. He is, or should be, the best

prepared man in the community, and as the leader or teacher of a training class he will find unusual opportunity for bringing a larger degree of equipment to his helpers than can be brought by any other person. If the pastor has but one Church to serve, he can easily plan for a training program that will run throughout the entire year, except through the Christmas season, through the revival season, or during extreme hot or cold weather.

One of the best times for conducting such a training program will be in connection with the regular mid-week prayer service. By giving thirty or forty minutes to a devotional service and an equal amount of time to the careful study of some one of the units of the training course, splendid work may be done. Such a plan as this has many advantages. It will, on the one hand, avoid an extra evening engagement both for the pastor and for the workers, and at the same time it will provide systematic study in connection with the usual midweek worship service. It will have also the added advantage of attracting many adult members of the Church to a constructive study of the Sunday school work and it will draw many Sunday school workers to the midweek devotional service, thus making it worth while to both groups.

Another very practical method will be to set aside in consultation with his workers certain definite periods for intensive study just as is provided for membership campaigns or revivals. Such a period would extend from one to four weeks according to the convenience of the largest number of the workers. Whenever the

pastor realizes that the "redemptive forces" of a local community are the "resident forces," he will see how very important it is that he shall invest a good deal of time and effort in training these "resident forces" for better and more permanent service.

If the pastor has two or more Churches which he is serving, the problem will be a little different, but not necessarily more difficult than if he served only one Church. In such cases, pastors with four or five preaching places have found it very helpful to conduct a training class in the afternoon of the Sunday when they visit that community, or again on Sunday evening just before the night preaching service. This evening period also provides a splendid time for enlisting certain of the young people in training classes. Such a class meeting only once a month, of course, will be rather slow in completing its work, and yet this will help a great deal in the course of a few years. Some pastors have arranged their work so that they can visit a community two or three times in succession when the regular preaching appointment comes due; good classes have been conducted on Friday or Saturday night before the regular preaching service, or on Monday night following it.

It is suggested, however, that because of the length of time necessary for completing a unit when only one meeting a month can be held, that a week or two given to intensive training classes two or three times during the year will prove one of the greatest blessings that can come to any community. Many pastors are testifying to the fact that as much good has been done to the

local Church by a week or two of intensive training as by an equal amount of time spent in other types of service. There is no reason why this should not be so, for a man has no more definitely religious duty than to fit himself better for Christian service. No labor will be more abiding in its nature than work of this character.

A pastor will not be able to make a success of training his officers and teachers without taking time for some real preparation on his own part. Nothing he can do will produce larger or more permanent results than that of bringing a larger vision and better equipment to those who are engaged in the work of character building. It will take time, energy, and patience; but the rewards are sure. The pastor who will train ten for better service is making himself a tenfold man.

THE PASTOR AND THE PUPILS

Mothers were pressing through the throng trying to bring their children into the presence of Jesus as he sat one day upon the mountain side teaching the multitude. Some of the disciples, seeing the children, began to interfere. No doubt they felt that Jesus had more important work to do with the throng of adults who were gathered about him than trying to deal with a lot of little children; but Jesus, seeing what his disciples were doing, rebuked them severely, and, turning from the adults, he said: "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven."¹ This, one of the most

¹Matthew 19: 14. (Revised Version.)

beautiful and suggestive pictures drawn from the life of Jesus, illustrates the attitude that Jesus held toward little children and clearly places a responsibility upon us to take them into our plans. Unfortunate, indeed, is that pastor who is lacking in a warm, sympathetic, and deep interest in the childhood of his Church and community.

Mr. Wesley once wrote to his preachers and said very plainly to them that the pastor should give some of his time each week to the teaching and training of the children in the homes of the people. In writing the plans for the pastor's work, Mr. Wesley made it a very specific part of his task to give due attention to their spiritual needs. With the growth in members of our Sunday schools and Churches, the pastor is finding it more and more difficult to make the personal contacts with the children that once were possible. He must not, however, allow this to lead him to the point of neglecting them. The pastor who will live in the heart of his people years after he has gone from a Church or community will be the one who has shown the most active and vital interest in the childhood and youth of that community. He should as soon as possible know by name not only the children in his own Church, but the other children in the community. Such a personal acquaintance will establish with them a real sense of fellowship and will give him right of way into their hearts and lives.

The writers of the gospel stories tell us that when Jesus was born into this world there was such a throng in Jerusalem that there was no place for him in the inn.

This incident has been woven into a Christmas song in which the choir repeats over and over the phrase: "There was no place for the child in the inn." It could almost be said that sometimes even in our present day there is no place in the Church for our children. Of course no Christian pastor would express it so plainly as this; but if he gives all of his time to adults, if he knows only the adult members of his Church, if he preaches only to adults, if the songs in the service can be understood only by adults, if his special efforts and the expenditure of money connected therewith is suited only to adults, if in his church there are only pews and chairs fitted for adults, and if all the extra comforts, such as separate rooms and carpeted floors and special decorations, are provided for adults, then the child will soon come to believe that there is no place in the Church for him. And when this is the case, we are not to be surprised when children turn away from the Church as soon as they are old enough to make their own choice in the matter.

In the mind of the child, the preacher stands for the Church. He is in a large measure the Church incarnate, and his attitude toward and interest in the children of the Church will have much to do with developing their ideals and loyalties to the Church. He will not only need to know the children by name, and call them by name, but he will need to know the homes from which they come. He must not only know them on Sunday morning when they come to Sunday school, but he should always be on the lookout so that he will know them when they are on the street, on their way

to public school, on the playground, or wherever they may be during the week.

To know and recognize them during the week will be of far greater importance in the mind of the child than to know and speak to them on Sunday morning, for here they expect to be recognized by the pastor. but if he knows and speaks to them during the week, he surely must be their friend. The kindly smile and the cordial greeting on the week day will go straight to the heart of the child or youth, and nothing will more quickly draw the interest of children and young people to the work of Sunday than for the pastor to show an interest in them on other days. The pastor may be sure that whether he knows or fails to know his children when he meets them on the street, they will know him and will be watching him. We have already referred to the important place of imitation and suggestion in the process of character formation. This is also very important as it relates to the example that is set by the pastor before his pupils.

The pastor should carefully guard against standing on the street corners or around stores engaged in telling or listening to questionable, shady stories or idle conversation. He of all Christian workers should be the most guarded in his conduct and conversation, and he should always avoid the appearance of evil. His life in the community must be an open book, for it is being read from day to day by the children and young people who are looking to him as an outstanding example, and his influence should be always on the side of right living, clean conversations, and lofty ideals.

THE PASTOR AND THE HOME

The pastor is the living link between the Church and the home. Often the home is thought of as being merely the feeder for the Sunday school so far as the religious training of children is concerned. But this is not true. The home is God's first unit of religious nurture and training. It is the first and most important unit of society, and it must remain the first and most important place for the training of childhood and youth. The religious education of the child is inseparable from his life within the family, and the pastor owes it to the children whom he serves to do all within his power to aid the home in providing right religious influences.

The easiest approach to the hearts and lives of parents will be through the children, and that pastor is wise who ties the children of the Church to himself as their pastor.

CHAPTER X

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS ASSOCIATES

WHAT MANNER OF PERSON HE MUST BE

IF one were to draw a picture that would include all of the qualifications that go to make up an ideal superintendent and then say that one must possess all of them before being elected to this important position, it would leave most of our Sunday schools without an official head. A great deal more has been done in the way of studying the qualifications for teaching and in providing suitable helps for teachers than has been done in the case of superintendents, and yet there are certain outstanding qualifications for which we may well look before choosing the man or woman who is to be the superintendent of the Church's educational program.

(1) First of all, he must be a person of unquestioned Christian integrity. His standing as a Christian man or woman must be recognized by the community in which he lives. Whatever other qualifications of life may be lacking, the community at large as well as the local Church must have confidence in the genuineness of his Christian experience. (2) He must also be a person who can get along with other folk because, as is indicated in the title of this chapter, he has been called to a task in which a number of other associates will labor with him. (3) He must also be a lover of

children and youth, and (4) he must know something about the methods and processes that are involved in education. We would not think of going into the business world and picking a merchant or a farmer or a lawyer to run one of our public schools unless he had had some particular training that specially prepared him for the work of education. In going out to select the one who is to be superintendent of the religious school, we must observe this same principle, because the laws of teaching religion are the same laws that operate in teaching anything else.

These are four outstanding qualifications, and all of the discussion that is to follow will presume that the superintendent possesses them. In most cases, *men* have been chosen to become superintendents of our Sunday schools, but there is no good reason for this. If in the community there is some woman who, because of her experience as a public school teacher or of some other qualifications, would have a better appreciation and knowledge of the Sunday school as an educational institution, there is no good reason why she should not be elected to this office. Throughout the country there is an increasing number of women, particularly in the small communities, who are rendering excellent service in this capacity. In fact, in most every community there are more women who have had special training in education than there are men. All things being equal, it would naturally fall to the selection of a man; but here, as in every other phase of the work, we need to look for the *best qualified person* and keep in mind the needs of the school.

HIS OFFICIAL RELATIONS

I shall endeavor in this chapter to have a heart-to-heart talk with superintendents, whether men or women, right out of the experience of the writer since he has had seventeen years of delightful service in this capacity. The discussion of relations, responsibilities, and problems of the superintendent comes out of the writer's own efforts to render a worth-while service to the Church, to the kingdom, and to childhood.

Frequent conversations with other superintendents, with pastors and teachers have led to the conviction that most of the failures in the office of superintendent are due to the fact that persons are appointed or elected to fill the office who have little knowledge of what the office involves as to duties and responsibilities. No man or woman should ever give the consent of his mind to be elected to this office who has not first taken stock of all that is required and what he possesses as to qualifications for the task. This is a position of great honor, but no one should ever hold it for the sake of honor. It is a position of great influence in the Church and in the community, but no one should ever hold it just for the sake of this influence. To accept the position from either of these motives is but to trifle with the most sacred thing in life—the souls and destinies of children and young people. Whenever one accepts so important a position of trust and responsibility, it at once becomes his solemn duty to the Church, to God, and to his fellow men to study and prepare himself for doing the work in a worth-while way. Of all

the work in the world that must not be done in shoddy fashion, it is the Lord's work.

How long should a superintendent remain in office? This is a question that is often asked, and no definite answer can be given. But this much can be said. His term of office should be only for one year at a time. If he proves to be successful, then it may be well to reëlect him for as many terms as he continues to grow and the school continues to improve. But no one has the moral right to be retained in office from year to year unless he is becoming more skillful and his work is bearing fruit as the months pass. It should never be considered a reflection upon anyone to have some one else elected to the place of superintendent or to any other position in the school. The choice should always fall upon the one best fitted to do this work. All of those concerned with the election should be as honest in this matter as in dealing with money or any other of life's relations. Sometimes a person may not be suited for one position, but could render a splendid service in another. Since the Sunday school is an educational institution, choice should not be made merely for the sake of passing the honors around. No one would think of changing public school teachers every two or three months. Why should changes be made in the school of religion? Paul taught that we all have different gifts or talents, and that each of us should be willing to serve in those positions that are best suited to our particular gifts.

The superintendent should never make it embarrassing to the pastor or to the officials of the Church

when a change is necessary. If he is not succeeding and the work is not growing, he should withdraw his name from consideration for election and assist in finding some one who could do it better than himself. Whenever any superintendent begins to grow old, he should realize that he is getting out of touch with young life, and it should be his pleasure as well as his duty to pass the responsibility on to some younger and better-trained person. This does not mean that he must lose his interest in the Sunday school, but that he will render his best service by doing something else.

One particular qualification that is greatly needed by the superintendent is that he must be an administrator. This is what the title of his office implies. But he must not think of managing the Sunday school as he would manage a mere business, where *things* are involved for the most part. He is the administrator of an educational program where human life is to be guided and character is to be formed. A successful manager of a farm, a business, a bank, or a ranch may by no means be suited to superintending a Sunday school. But if one is successful in any of these lines he may by study and preparation be able to use these gifts in rendering a very valuable service to the educational work of the Church. One of the greatest drawbacks to successful managers of business when they become Sunday school superintendents is that they do not realize that the Sunday school is an entirely different thing and, therefore, they do not study it as they study their own business.

The superintendent is chosen according to the legal

provision of his Church. By reason of this he becomes the official link between the whole Church organization and its educational organization. By virtue of this peculiar relationship, he will be expected to make such reports as are necessary to keep the pastor and the membership of the Church informed as to the progress, plans, and needs of the Sunday school. One reason why so many adult members of the Church are not interested in the Sunday school is because no one keeps them informed as to what it is doing and what it needs. Carefully prepared reports, made at least every three months, would do a great deal in the way of keeping all of the Church members informed and interested in the work of the Sunday school. In addition to the frequent reports, there should be a general report prepared at the end of each school year or at such times as are required. These should go into detail as to the number on roll, the number of new pupils, the number that have joined the Church during the year, the amount of money raised, and many other things that find proper place in a Sunday school report.

CONFER OFTEN

The superintendent will confer freely and often with the pastor, with his officers and teachers, and with the leaders of his denomination as to the kind and quantity of literature that ought to be secured and used by the school. It has many times been discovered that otherwise good teachers are doing a very poor piece of work with their classes largely because some one

who is responsible for sending in the orders insists that the school cannot afford to secure the right kind of literature. Sometimes teachers' helps are not provided; and it happens now and then that the literature is late in arriving because it has been ordered late. Classes and teachers have been known to go for months without any sort of lesson helps. Sometimes it happens that the superintendent himself is to blame for this false economy. A farmer might as well call his calves up from the pasture and put no feed in the trough as to call the children together on Sunday morning and have no spiritual food provided for them. As a usual thing, parents can be interested in securing the best religious material for use in the Sunday school by the ones who teach their children, and it is the duty of the superintendent to see to it that they are informed as to the needs of the school in the matter of literature and equipment.

There are thousands of children in the small Sunday schools who are reading the poorest sort of trash in the papers and magazines all because the local Church has not made provision for using the finest literature that is published by the denominational headquarters. As the administrator of the school, the superintendent will, of course, try to keep his finances in good shape so that there will always be money on hand to pay for the things that are needed. In fact, the superintendent should present the needs of the Sunday school to the official board and ask them to make provision for the literature and other supplies in the annual Church budget. This is being done in many Churches.

The superintendent is responsible for seeing that a workers' meeting is regularly held. By his own presence he may set an example of regular attendance before his coworkers. This is without doubt one of his most important duties. Here in conference with the other workers, the plans, policies, and programs of the school can be worked out together. Too often the superintendent tries to do all of this himself, and then he says, "*I have planned. I want. I am asking,*" and it is no wonder that at times his teachers refuse to accept the plans that he hands down. A wise leader will present his plans to his coworkers for their opinion; after they have freely and frankly discussed them and made such changes as the wisdom of the group may determine, they then become "*our plans*" and "*our programs.*" In this way he will be able to secure the loyal and enthusiastic support of his officers and teachers. It is a trait of human nature that we love to have a hand in determining what we will do. This is as it should be, for each member of the group ought to be able to know just what is being planned and to make suggestions and think through with all the rest of the group what will be the best for the school. This will prevent the friction that oftentimes arises when the superintendent without consulting his teachers will announce a picnic, a workers' meeting, or something else, and will discover that there are two or three other plans under way which are in conflict with his announcements. A workers' meeting regularly held with a definite program will be most effective in superintending the Sunday school and securing results.

ADDITIONAL QUALITIES

In the work of being a manager or organizer of the educational work of the Church, the superintendent will need to have plenty of diplomacy; that is to say, he must be able to harmonize conflicting interests. Whenever people try to work together there is always danger of friction, misunderstanding, and sometimes of hard feelings. At this point, the superintendent can render a very real service by keeping all of the workers harmoniously working with him and with the school. When a misunderstanding arises between any two members of his official group, he can do no better service than to get them together and talk over their problems, and in almost every case he will be able to prevent little frictions from growing into bad feelings and bitterness.

Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Still another quality that the superintendent must possess is that of being able to inspire his associates and to give them a vision of the importance and bigness of their common task. Of course if the superintendent has never caught the vision himself, it will not be possible for him to share it with his associates. It sometimes happens that the associates will catch the vision first and then share it with the superintendent. If the superintendent comes to his task in a half-hearted, indifferent way from a sheer sense of duty, the session of the Sunday school will become little more than an empty form and will mean but little to the lives of the pupils. But if he is enthused, if he believes in his job, his spirit will be caught by his associates, and they will

become inspired and enthused for their work. In the matter of imparting a vision, as in all other phases of his work, the superintendent must be a leader, and the place of a leader is out in front and not trailing behind.

HIS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SUNDAY MORNING

There are so many things that fall to the lot of the superintendent that to name them all would take more space than can be used in this text, but there are certain very definite things for which he above all others is responsible.

One of his very first and important duties is to see to it that the building where the Sunday morning session is held is prepared and ready for the service. A good many Sunday schools fall off in attendance during the cold weather. One of the reasons for this is that no one sees to it that fires are built and that the various rooms are warm and ready for the session when the people come. If the Sunday school session has been set to begin at 9:45 o'clock and no one has opened the doors and started the fires, it will not be very long until people will wait until 10 or even 10:15 or 10:30. They naturally reason that it is not necessary for them to come any earlier for, if the weather is cold, they must stand or sit around with their wraps on until the room gets warm. Nothing will detract from the real spirit and value of the Sunday morning session any more than to have the officers and pupils stand while some one cleans out the ashes, carries them out doors while some one else whittles shavings or breaks up sticks of wood to start the fire. Then the litter must be cleaned

up from the floor while the crowd is gathered about or left to lie there and look ugly through all the services. In some schools, more than half of the time set apart for the Sunday morning session is wasted in this fashion. All of this should be done on Saturday. If kindling is to be cut, the stove cleaned out, the fuel brought in, it should be arranged and ready to light on Sunday morning. Even then the superintendent should come half an hour before the time for beginning in order that the place of meeting may be nice and warm when folks begin to come. Not only should a fire be built (or, if the weather is warm, the windows opened), but the whole place should be put in readiness, furniture and floors cleaned and dusted, pews and seats properly arranged, the songbooks and other literature properly distributed, in fact, all the physical equipment ready for use before teachers and pupils begin to arrive. It is not necessary, of course, that the superintendent shall do all of this, but it is certainly his duty either to do it or to see that it is done. Whatever assistance he may have in this matter the superintendent ought to arrive at the place of meeting from fifteen to thirty minutes before anyone else in order that he may know that things are in readiness and be ready to welcome the pupils as they come.

A second very definite responsibility with regard to Sunday morning is to know that every position in the school will be properly filled. He should never arrive at the church only to discover that the leader of music, the secretary, or one of his teachers is absent. If they are to be absent, he should know it beforehand and

have some one already prepared to take their place. By keeping in close touch with his coworkers through the week, he will be able to know if they are ill or away from home and whether or not they will be present on Sunday. Nothing is more discouraging to the pupils in a class than to have the superintendent come around and say, "Children, I wonder where your teacher is this morning?"; or at the last minute say: "Your teacher didn't come, and I have asked Miss Supply to be your teacher this morning." And if Miss Supply has had no chance to prepare, but has been picked up on the spur of the moment, she cannot do much teaching, and the children know it. His work should be so planned that whenever any of his coworkers are to be absent a supply may know it far enough in advance to have time to prepare his work. The persons who make it a practice to be absent from their post of duty should by all means be relieved and some one more dependable put in their place. The superintendent should be tactful in removing such an individual, but he should not hesitate to do it for fear of giving offense to some person or family. He is responsible for meeting the needs of the children and to leave them without a regular teacher is giving offense of the most hurtful kind to them. It is well for us to recall what Jesus said: "It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."¹

¹Luke 17: 1, 2. (King James Version.)

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

Now we have come to the Sunday morning session. The place is in order and there are officers and teachers to assist the superintendent in conducting the school of religion. The superintendent will be responsible for this morning session, and he will come prepared for conducting the opening worship service for those of the older groups who must meet in the large room of the church. It does not mean that he will always lead this service, but he is responsible for seeing that it is properly led. From time to time he will want to enlist the services of others, and in this service he should give proper recognition to the relation that the pastor sustains to the school. It will be only occasionally that the superintendent will use this opening service for making a talk. Aimless, rambling talks by superintendents have served as funeral dirges for many a Sunday school session. Above all things he should never, never, never give a review of the lesson before the whole school.

Time that is set aside for the work of the lesson should be given over to the teachers as they appear before their several classes. It is in the class that the lesson is to be taught, and it is in the class that the review is to be made, if a review is necessary. A bright boy, when asked what he thought about a certain lesson review that had just been made by the superintendent said: "O, he just spilled the beans for our class." The teacher will have presented the lesson that was suited to her own group, and for the superintendent, who as a rule has made no special study, to undertake a review

at the closing exercises will mean nothing more nor less than to confuse the whole group. Workers have the right to insist that the lesson is to be given by the teacher and that the superintendent must not consume the time of the school in a lesson review or lesson comments.

Again, the superintendent is responsible for the business of the school, but he should not conduct the business on Sunday morning. Matters that are of a business nature should be attended to at the workers' meeting or at some special meeting called for the discussion of business. Necessary announcements may be made as to business matters, but for a discussion of business this is not the proper place. Attention is called to these matters here because the superintendent is responsible for the use of all the time that is not taken by the teachers.

Another of his responsibilities, and this a most serious one, is that of the selection of his associates. This duty should be shared with him by the pastor or, what is better still, by a Sunday school committee. The superintendent who picks his associates in haste usually repents at leisure. The appointing of teachers is not a game of tag. It is a most serious matter. It is a matter that ought to be prayed over and counseled about. He will need always to be on the lookout for suitable persons to fill possible vacancies. He should particularly keep his eyes fixed upon the young men and the young women who are growing up in the Church and who come from the best homes of the Church. He should not pick them too young, but as they approach

maturity he should provide opportunity for putting them to work. Suggestion has been made in another chapter regarding the necessity for training them. The many responsibilities that rest upon the superintendent will drain heavily upon his time, his energy, his talents, and his money. He ought not to accept the position unless he is willing to make this contribution, and when he has accepted it ought to be recognized by the officers of the Church and by the pastor that he is a very busy man, and they should, therefore, relieve him from many other duties that are usually thrust upon him. He is usually one of the best and most earnest men in the Church and, because of his willingness, whenever there is an extra job to be done it is apt to be put upon the superintendent. But his task will require time that other tasks do not demand. He must make a place on his schedule for study, for the reading of magazines, and the leaflets that are published for his help. He will pause often in his activity for prayer and meditation. Still more of his time will be given to the actual work of the Sunday school, which really runs for seven days in the week. He will need to visit the sick of his school, look up the absentees, confer with the workers, attend the workers' meeting, prepare for the Sunday morning session. It will also be necessary for him to give some time and attention to the recreational and social life of the members of the school.

HE MUST STUDY

One of the heaviest responsibilities that rests upon the Sunday school superintendent, also one of the most

important, is that the very nature of his task requires that he must do much study. He is superintending an organization that is dealing with human life, life that begins with infancy and continues through to old age, and he will need to know something of the needs of all these different ages. He will need to know something of the laws that govern growing life so that he will be able to know how to provide wisely to meet their needs from year to year. He must know the laws of learning and in his relation to his teachers he must be able to talk with them about the methods they are using. In fact, he must each week be studying modern methods in Sunday school work just as he studies modern methods in his own business.

The successful farmer, banker, or merchant will each week read the periodical that is published in the interest of his business. Our worker must likewise, read the magazines that are published each week or month telling him of the latest and best methods in this the big business of being a Sunday school superintendent. If his heart is in the work, and if he works with intelligence, he will be the busiest and the most valuable man in the local Church. He may or may not be growing rich in this world's goods, but he will be laying up for himself spiritual treasures that can never be taken away from him. As long as he studies and works and his work produces fruit in the form of Christian character, there will be a place, for him in the official life of the Church. But if he merely holds on to the office because he hates to give it up, no matter how many years he may have been there or how prominent he

may be as a citizen or how much influence he has in the Church, he has no right to occupy the position. To you Christian men or women who are now occupying this important place, or to you young men and young women who are studying this text, I want to say that the task is a hard one. It is a task with many problems and difficulties. It is a task that will bring many heartaches and disappointments. But it is a task that challenges heroic Christian men and women to do their best. It is a task that has rich rewards. It is a task that is rich in the finest fellowships with the best and truest people in the world. It is a task which, when well done, will surely win for you the approval of our Lord and Master: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." There is no lodge or club that offers a nobler fellowship than this to which you belong. Some of earth's greatest spirits have occupied the position and have exalted it. High up on the roll of honor are the names of such men as B. F. Jacobs, Marion Lawrence, Frank Brown, John R. Pepper, and a host of other Christian laymen. It is an honor worthy of any great man. It is an ambition worthy of any young man or young woman to become the superintendent of a Sunday school where he may live and labor at the greatest task in the world, the task of building character.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER AND THE CLASS

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE

JESUS is recognized by all who study his methods to have been the world's Master Teacher. He was more often called Master than by any other title, and the word "master" in his day meant "teacher." When a certain young man came to him asking for guidance, he called him "Good Teacher," and Nicodemus said: "Thou art a teacher come from God." It is now nearly nineteen hundred years since he walked along the dusty roads of Palestine with the throng pressing about him to hear the words that fell from his lips, and since he pushed the boat out into the sea and sat down and taught the multitude on the hillside; but the more we study his life the more we discover that his main purpose was that of teaching. He helped the sick, he restored sight to blind eyes, he made the lame walk, and he fed the hungry, but all this was done that he might have a better opportunity to teach them that he was the Truth, the Life, and the Way.

Jesus was indeed a Master Teacher. Educators have come to study and use his methods. The clearness of his aims, the beauty of his illustrations, the simplicity of his language, the force of his questions, and the directness of his answers, his ability to secure attention, the ease with which he gathered people about

him, make a study of his teaching methods of interest and value for all time. When he went away at the close of his earthly ministry, he had such a high appreciation of the value of teaching that his last words to his disciples were: "Go teach."

From that day to this, the Christian Church has believed in and used the teaching method, and the history of the Christian Church is but a record of successes and failures in teaching. Nothing will be of greater value to the Christian teacher than to study carefully the methods that Jesus used in his teaching and to try to follow his example.

SOME ELEMENTS IN THE TEACHING METHODS OF JESUS

The first thing to be noted about Jesus as a teacher is that he believed in the principle of growth and development. In the Gospel according to Mark, we find Jesus saying that the kingdom of heaven is a matter of growth and development. He used the parable of the seed growing gradually: "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."¹ Not only did he emphasize the importance of this principle, but he showed his dependence upon it for the spread of his kingdom. He said, "The kingdom is within you," and again, "The kingdom is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal," or, "The kingdom is like unto a grain of mustard seed" which, though very small when sown in the earth, will grow and become a great plant.

The Sunday school teacher who does not have an

¹Mark 4: 28. (Revised Version.)

appreciation of this principle of life, the principle of growth and development, has failed to understand the plan of God with regard to the nurture of life and the growth of the kingdom. For a long while the Church lost sight of this principle, but modern education is calling our attention to it again, and it has been formulated into certain laws that govern the unfolding of life. Jesus taught all these truths to his disciples many, many years ago.

A second thing to be noted in the life of Jesus as a teacher was that he had a passion for his work. Over and over again in the New Testament record we find such words as these, "And being seated, he began to teach," or again; "He began to teach," "And he taught them, saying." There is a wonderful discourse that is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew which we call the Sermon on the Mount. It is interesting as we read the record to discover that it was not a sermon but a teaching discourse. The record reads: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, *and taught them.*"¹ At all times and places wherever he went, Jesus seemed to be seeking an opportunity to teach. The size of his audience made no difference to him. He met one woman at Jacob's well and began to teach her. At other times, he gathered the small group of his disciples and taught them, and yet again, it was the multitude who learned from him. Everywhere and all the time he was teaching.

Another thing to be noted is that Jesus taught with

¹Matthew 5: 1, 2. (King James Version.)

enthusiasm. One cannot read the story of his life without being impressed with the fact that Jesus gave himself with great enthusiasm to everything he did, whether it was attending a wedding party, healing the sick, or teaching the multitude. He threw his whole life into the work. Jesus was never driven by a sense of duty or a desire for prominence, but before him always was an opportunity to help others to know better how to live. He had a great message to deliver, and he delivered it with his whole soul. Jesus had supreme confidence in the results of his teaching. He never questioned the final outcome. He never said, "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness for it *may be* they will be filled," or, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they *may be able* to see God." His statements were always positive: "They shall." There was no question in his mind about the results. He was teaching a message of truth and life, and he believed in the results. How necessary it is in the life of a Christian teacher that he shall have assurance and confidence, or, as Paul expressed it, the conviction which ever says: "I know." The Christian teacher who goes before a class on Sunday morning without confidence in his message and assurance of the success of the truth he teaches is already defeated before the lesson begins. The supreme task of the teacher is to present Jesus Christ, and unless he can say, "I know him," his teaching will be as sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

Jesus taught the truth of God because he loved folks. It was for the love of folks and the good he might do that he came into the world, that he suffered the

hardships, endured privation, and finally went to the cross. He gave his life with his message. And so it must be with the Christian teacher. He must give himself along with his teaching because he loves folks and is trying to help them to live better and become more Christlike. The message of the Christian teacher must be backed up by the investment of his own life. Jesus taught because he had something to teach. His Father had sent him into the world with a life-giving message; a message of hope, comfort, cheer, and good will; a message that would make men and women better and make this a better world in which to live. The Christian teacher who does not have a like message can never do real teaching. The message will get to the people only as Christians carry it to them.

THE TEACHER THROUGH THE WEEK

The teacher is the key person in the work of the Sunday school. If there is failure here, little can be accomplished. No matter how modern the building, how conveniently arranged, how good the literature, if the teacher fails, very little can be accomplished. To the teacher is given the closest and most intimate relation in the school, and this gives to him the opportunity to get right down into the heart and life of the pupils, to know their secrets and sorrows, their hopes and aspirations. To the real teacher all the most sacred and tender emotions of the life of his pupils are laid bare as naturally as the flower unfolds its petals to the warmth of the summer sun. Do you see the children rush down the road to meet a kindly, sweet-

faced, gentle woman, or do you see them crowding each other for the chance to sit next to her during the worship service or at the hour of preaching? This is but an illustration of how close the bond of sympathy may be between a teacher and a pupil.

We have already pointed out the fact that teaching is very much more than merely giving instruction or guiding in the study of a lesson. It is also the sharing of the teacher's life with the life of the growing boys and girls. In this very sharing, the pupils come into very intimate and beautiful relationship with the teacher. The real teacher is either a hero or a heroine to the members of his class. He is an object of worship, of admiration, and devotion. To adolescent boys, the teacher will fill the place of a chum, a pal, a companion. How fortunate is that class if the teacher is one who can share with them their games and sports, their hobbies, and the life of the great out of doors. One of the greatest needs for the adolescent class of girls is a teacher who can share with them their secrets, their love affairs, their joys, and their disappointments. More times than one can tell the teacher will know more of the secrets of the adolescent boy or girl than will the father or mother.

The one sure way to secure the interest and affection of the pupils in a class is for the teacher to become interested in the things which interest them. This will require of the teacher much of time and energy and thought. Through the social contacts of the week, the teacher will be binding the love and esteem of his pupils to his own life with hoops of steel, and when this

is done the teaching that he does on Sunday will touch receptive hearts.

Unfortunate indeed is that class whose teacher does not know and mingle with them through the week, but tries only to impart some instruction on Sunday morning.

PREPARING FOR SUNDAY

The question is often asked by the teachers: "How early in the week should one begin to prepare the lesson for Sunday?" There is but one answer that can be given to this question, and that is, the teacher should always be preparing, not for a single lesson, but for all the lessons that are to come. The teacher should never prepare any lesson all by itself. It must be related to what has gone before and what is to follow. As soon as the quarter or the year begins, the wise teacher will begin to study all the lessons for the quarter or the year. To illustrate: Suppose the lessons for the quarter are found in the Book of Acts. The very first thing that the teacher needs to do is to read the entire Book of Acts and then begin to read other books and lesson helps that will enable him to get the whole story in mind. To prepare and teach each lesson by itself is like making a crazy quilt out of scraps. It may be sewed together to the other lessons, but will not be woven as one piece.

A very successful teacher of boys has for many years made it a rule to try each week to find some article or story or picture to put aside for future use with his class. Even the summer vacations that he

takes in his automobile will find him constantly on the lookout for something to show or tell his class. In this way he has an abundant store of material to be used for illustrations of the lessons or of any truth he is trying to get his class to grasp. Should you ask this teacher how far ahead he prepares his lessons, his reply would be: "I am always preparing." So every real teacher must be always preparing, not waiting until Saturday night or Sunday morning, but throughout the weeks and months being ever on the lookout for things that will help to make his lessons interesting and vital.

The teacher who merely reads the Scriptures and the lesson comments will not be able to do real teaching. There must be study, prayer, and meditation. All these must engage the mind and heart of the teacher through every day of the week to make the lesson on Sunday morning worth while.

THE TEACHER ON SUNDAY MORNING

In preceding chapters in this text, it has been pointed out how necessary it is that the Sunday school worker shall be physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually fit for his task. The teacher will need a greater degree of preparation for the Sunday morning hour than any other person in the school. He must come to his task with a cheerful face and a hearty greeting, and he must be in his place long before the time for the Sunday school to begin its work. The very best way to insure on-time attendance by the pupils is for the teacher to be on time every time. The teacher must also re-

member that in a very special way he is setting an example for the conduct of the pupils. During the opening service, the attitude and behavior of the teacher will be copied by the pupils. If the teacher moves about, is restless or irritable, or talks to those about him; if he does not take part in the singing or in the responsive reading, or bow reverently when the school is engaged in prayer, he will discover that his pupils are doing likewise. On the other hand, the teacher who realizes during such a religious service that he is an example of conduct and who with a reverent yet joyful spirit takes part in the service will be both an inspiration to his class and a help to the whole school.

THE TEACHER AND CLASS LOYALTY

The teacher will have a great deal to do with creating right habits and loyalties; habits of behavior, habits of entering into the service, habits of staying for the Church service, and loyalties to the preacher and to the Church. The teacher should be very careful about speaking critically of the Church, of its minister, or its leaders in the presence of the members of the class. It may be that the criticisms are deserved in part, but the effect upon the boys and girls will be very damaging. It may altogether destroy their confidence in the Church and in the minister. The influence of many a good preacher has been utterly destroyed by the unthoughted criticisms of parents and Sunday school teachers.

However close the ties of affection between the teach-

er and pupils may become, they should never reach the point where loyalty to the individual teacher will overshadow larger loyalties to the class, to the school, to the Church as a whole, and to Jesus Christ. One of the finest contributions that the teacher can make to any individual or to the pupils in a class will be in the manner of cultivating a real spirit of loyalty to the Church and to Jesus. The test will come as to whether or not the loyalty to the teacher has outgrown the loyalty to the school when the time comes to promote the class to another teacher. The teacher himself must aid the class in transferring to the other teacher whatever loyalty they may have for him. It is unfair to the children as they are growing up to be kept in one class under one teacher over a long period of time. One of the laws of growing life is that there must be a feeling of progress, and in order to do this the school must provide for promotion from class to class. Pupils will need to come under the influence of other persons and be able to draw from them other qualities of life and character. Not only is it best for the pupils to change teachers, but a new group of pupils helps the teacher. By confining his efforts to a particular age group, he will become more and more effective each year of his work. Some teachers can do excellent work with children six, seven, or eight years of age, but will utterly fail in trying to teach those sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen years of age. The teachers should be so much interested in the growth and development of their pupils that all the while they are teaching they will be planning for the day when their work with that pupil is

finished and passed over to another, and a new class comes under their care.

When the time for promotion comes, the teacher should do everything to encourage members of his class to transfer their loyalties and affections to the new teacher. The personal attachments that naturally grow up between teacher and pupils should never be allowed to stand in the way of the program of promotion which is indorsed by the school. For the teacher to appeal to the personal love of his pupils and create dissatisfaction when the time for promotion comes is not only doing a real injury to the pupils but is unworthy of the high trust that has been reposed in him as a teacher in the Church school. However much a teacher may love a class, or an individual in his class, he must never allow his own selfish desires to stand in the way of the future welfare of the class and the success of the school.

THE NEW SCHOLAR AND THE ABSENTEE

To have and to hold should be the purpose of every Sunday school teacher. To reach out and add new members to the class, and then to hold them to the class, should be the aim of every teacher and every class. That spirit of selfishness that would make a class try to hold its own little group together should never be permitted to get a real start. A live class is a growing class, but the growing must not be at the expense of other classes or of other Sunday schools. By systematic and sustained effort, the teacher should plan that his class reach out and draw in those who are not attending

Sunday school anywhere. Responsibility for directing this work of securing new members and of making the new members feel at home when they come will largely rest upon the teacher. No class should ever work for new members just for the sake of members or in order to win a contest, but for the love of doing good to some one else.

Once a pupil is enrolled in a class, he becomes a responsibility of the teacher. He must be interested and held, and one of the best ways for doing this will be to always look after him when he is absent. Whenever for any cause a pupil does not appear on Sunday morning, the teacher should immediately get in touch with him and know the reason for the absence. If it is indifference, he should be encouraged. If he has been sick, the teacher should visit in his home and by little deeds of kindness and ministries of love secure his permanent loyalty and attachment.

Some classes are always after new members, but give little attention to them when once they are enrolled. To provide for a permanent and successful growth, new members must be gained and old ones held.

THE TEACHER AND THE HOME

There are no two institutions in our American life that have more of common interest in growing childhood and youth than the home and the Church. The parents representing the home and the Sunday school teacher representing the Church get closer to the life and have more to do with the forming of character than any other persons. This means that the Sunday school teacher

must be in constant touch with the home from which his pupils come and must have first-hand and intimate knowledge of the home life that surrounds them. He must know whether or not the influences in the home are religious or whether the home is indifferent or even antagonistic to religion. No teacher can know how to meet and to minister to the spiritual needs of any pupil until he knows just what the home is doing for him. This means that the teacher will visit often in the home, hold frequent conferences with the father and mother, and talk over with them the welfare of their children and enlist their sympathetic coöperation in what the Church is trying to do for their children. The frequent presence of the teacher in the home will establish a bond of sympathy between parent and teacher and between teacher and pupil that will make the work of the Sunday school much more effective. Through this frequent visitation the teacher will not only be able to render a real service to the parents in helping them to rear their children, but will become a living link between the home and the Church.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOAL OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKER

THE DEFINITION

THE total purpose of the Sunday school is set forth in its evangelistic aim. By this it is meant that the ultimate goal of the Sunday school is to win each and every member to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and train him to do effective service in his name.

To win and train for Christian living—this is evangelism in the truest and best sense of the word. If the Sunday school fails in the accomplishment of this goal, it is not fulfilling its real mission. Since this is the aim and goal of the school, it naturally follows that those doing the work, whether as pastors, superintendents, or teachers, must be evangelists.

An evangelist is any person who carries the gospel of Jesus and his life to those who do not have it and wins them to an acceptance of Jesus for themselves. This gives a new meaning to the term "evangelism," and increases the number of those who are evangelists. It will be necessary for the Sunday school worker to have a clear understanding of the meaning of his task, for here is the very heart of the whole effort which is being put forth through the Sunday school.

Far too long we have thought of evangelism as being a peculiar type of public service carried on by a specialist whom we call an "evangelist." Evangelism,

however, need not be limited to the occasional series of meeting which we hold. It should be made the objective of all the services that are conducted through the Church. In recent years, there has come into use a new term, the meaning of which is not very clear to a good many of our best people. This term is "educational evangelism," or, as it is more commonly called, "Sunday school evangelism."

In the first place, this kind of evangelism means the process by which the whole life is developed in a full, round, and symmetrical manner. Luke tells us in his gospel that Jesus grew in wisdom (mentally), and in stature (physically), and in favor with God (spiritually), and man (socially). In these few words, he is telling the story of how Jesus grew from childhood to maturity, developing in the normal way the full-rounded life. This normal and complete development of all the powers and capacities of the human life is exactly what is being sought after as an ideal in the method that is called educational evangelism.

Again, this kind of evangelism recognizes the fact that life does not develop in sections or by fits and starts, but that it is a continuous process and that all efforts to develop the religious or spiritual nature must be in accord with this principle. The ideal of Sunday school evangelism is that we should bring to bear upon the growing life from day to day and from year to year those influences and forces that will keep the religious life continuously growing. The enterprise should not be confined to a special effort put forth once a year: it is something which should be continuous through-

out the year. It is because of this principle that we have in the preceding chapters placed so much emphasis upon the daily life of the Sunday school worker. Every contact that he has with others, his attitudes and his conversations are all a part of the life that he is sharing with the pupils. This kind of evangelism works quietly and without attracting very much attention. It is none the less powerful. It is a constant invitation to others to walk in the Christian way and to find fellowship with Christ.

Religion is life. Jesus spoke of the "abundant life," and no better evangelistic appeal can be made to others than that of setting an example by living a religious life. Of a pioneer preacher it was said that his very presence made men good. Did not Jesus say: "Ye are the light." "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are witnesses." It is very unfortunate that so often we get the idea that the Sunday school worker is merely to teach, and some one else must be brought in to secure conversions. We would not think of the work of a parent as that of feeding and caring for the children through long weary years until they were grown and then inviting some one in from the outside to show them how to love their parents. In the normal home, love would grow and ripen with the years. Nor would it be any the less genuine because there had been no break in its continuity.

Our task as evangelists must proceed upon the theory that as the child comes into the world with the ability to love its parents it also comes with those powers of a religious nature which enable him to love Christ. By

normal growth and development this inborn nature will lead him to express himself in terms of love and fellowship with Jesus Christ. Jesus gave to little children a very definite place in his kingdom, and in doing this he unquestionably set his approval upon the process of evangelism that has come to be used by the Sunday school.

We should remember that Jesus was born into a Jewish home, where the parents followed the custom of the Jewish people; that on the eighth day he was presented to God in the Temple. Now, the place of a child born in a Jewish home was very well understood as giving him membership in the Jewish Church and thereby entitling him to all the rights and privileges and promises that were given to those who were of the seed of Abraham. Since Jesus has said that to children belongs the kingdom of heaven, are we not justified in trying to keep the child within the kingdom and thus enable him to grow up never knowing himself to be other than a child of God? Paul seems to have recognized the truth of this when in writing to Timothy he said: "From a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."¹ In these words, Paul very clearly defines what is really meant by the term "educational evangelism."

One of the great leaders of the early Christian Church, Irenæus by name, wrote as follows: "Christ came to save all persons through himself; infants and little ones, and children, and youth, and the aged." For

¹2 Timothy 3: 15. (Revised Version.)

the first several centuries of the Christian era, much attention was given to the religious nurture and training of the children, as the Christian Church followed the custom of the old Jewish Church; they dedicated their children in infancy, thus recognizing them as being heirs of the kingdom of Christ. In the Book of Acts, repeated reference is made to the custom that when an adult was converted to Christianity his whole family came with him, and the children, through the father, were entitled to the rights and privileges of the Christian fellowship. Accepting this principle, this kind of evangelism starts from the idea that the child has a definite religious nature, that this nature is capable of growth and development, that he holds membership in the kingdom of Christ, and that by proper training and nurture of mind and heart and will, he will the more easily grow up within the Christian "way" and choose for himself the Christian life.

This evangelism recognizes that though a child may be born into the kingdom and be entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Christian Church, there will come a time in his life when he must for himself exercise his own free will and confess faith in Christ and accept him as a personal Saviour. There is no more important responsibility resting upon the pastor or teacher than to watch carefully the unfolding life of the child and offer to him a definite opportunity for making this great choice for himself. The old idea that children must sow their wild oats and go to the devil before they can come to Christ is contrary to Christian experience, is not warranted by Scripture, and is not in accord with

the teachings of Jesus. No such idea seems to have appeared in Christian thought either during the life of Christ or in the four centuries that followed.

About the fourth century of the Christian era there lived a wild, reckless, drunken wretch, past thirty years of age, whose father was a pagan and whose mother was a Christian. He came suddenly face to face with his own wretched life, and through the reading of the Scripture he found his way to God by means of a sweeping conversion. By reason of his far swing away from God, he experienced an unusual return to God. He was indeed made over and became a new creature in Christ Jesus. His experience points out to us the marvelous power of Christ in transforming broken lives; but we should not get from this the idea that a life must be broken before Christ will accept it. This man, Augustine, became one of the great saints of Christian history and will remain forever an illustration of the cleansing power of Christ. It was natural for him to teach about conversion in terms of his own experience.

Following along the line of his teachings there came the theology of the Dark Ages. At that time many men thought of God, the Creator of the world, as having wound it up and gone away to let it run by itself. Under the influence of this teaching, God was placed completely outside the world. He only returned for an occasional visit to manifest his presence in some terrible pestilence and destructive storm. Or, when he dealt with human beings, he brought them through a spectacular or cataclysmic conversion.

Following this there grew up the theology of the Roman Catholic Church that since God was absent from his world he had made the pope his personal representative, and the pope in turn gave authority and power to bishops and priests to forgive the sins of the people. Such views as these are not in harmony with the ideas of our Protestant Christianity. They were not in harmony with the practice of the early Christian Church, and they certainly are not justified by the teachings of Jesus.

It is well for us to bear in mind that no one type of Christian experience is better than another. One of our difficulties has been that we have singled out some outstanding experience and tried to measure all other experiences by the same rule. The important thing is that the individual shall have an experience of fellowship with Jesus Christ, and it matters little just the form in which that experience may be had. Just as there will be a difference in the type or form of experience between adults, so there must of necessity be different forms of experience between those of different ages.

Sunday school evangelism does not undertake to set a single standard or a certain type for its conversion experience, but rather it takes into account the fact that just as there are different temperaments so will there be different forms of experience. Educational evangelism is, therefore, not in conflict with any other form of evangelism, such as the revival or the one-to-win-one method of personal evangelism. It is but a part of the whole program of evangelism that must

reach all the people of all stations and conditions of life. The effort of educational evangelism is to lay hold of the hand, heart, and life of children and youth and lead them through the whole period of life in harmony with the will and plan and purpose of God. Surely if there must be a miracle in connection with the transforming of a life, it is more miraculous to save the whole life than simply to save a part of it.

Those forms of evangelism that are best suited to adults will try to reach out to those who have gone away from God out into a life of sin and bring them back to God through faith in Jesus Christ. Educational evangelism concerns itself primarily with a program of conservation, formation, and construction. Other forms of evangelism will be concerned with reclamation, reformation, and reconstruction; but neither of these is in conflict with the other, and both of them are necessary for a complete program of evangelization for the whole world. It is because of the different needs of the different ages that the methods good for one may not be always suitable to the needs of others. At this point in our work we must be careful. By this it is meant that the evangelistic appeal that it is necessary to make to the adult sinner who has wasted his life is not the same kind of an appeal that should be made to the boy or girl who has been reared in a Christian home and under the influence of Christian teachers. Persons from either group are, of course, to be brought to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour, but the method of procedure is entirely different.

Ofttimes in the presentation of the evangelistic appeal to hardened sinners wrong ideas as to what it means to be a Christian have been planted in the mind of youth. That is to say, such an appeal ofttimes will interpret Christianity to them as though it were necessary for them to lead a wicked, reckless, godless life in order that they might be able to have that type of conversion experience which only is "genuine." But all this idea is wrong. Only gamblers can experience a gambler's conversion; only a thief can experience a thief's conversion; and a drunkard the experience of being saved from the curse of strong drink. Surely the child who has none of these things in his life must not be expected to have that kind of conversion. There are as many kinds of conversion as there are kinds of human experience. To some the sense of forgiveness of sin will come in the form of a rushing, mighty wind; to others it will be like the still, small voice. To some the relief from the guilt of sin will bring laughter; to others the shedding of tears. To some the experience will be like passing from a dark room into the open sunshine; to others it may come like the delicate tints of the morning before the rising of the sun. To each the experience will come in his own way, and because it has been different from what has come to others does not affect its genuineness.

Efforts to produce a standardized type of conversion experience should be discouraged, for they fly in the face of the laws that God has written into human life. There is no question but that the effort to secure common types of religious experience has ofttimes produced

an insincere response; and that such persons make up our list of backsliders.

EDUCATIONAL EVANGELISM AND THE ADULT

In the discussion of this particular type of evangelism that we called "educational," we must not overlook the fact that it has a very definite relation to that other type of evangelism that we have come to know as the revival. This special, or revival, type is primarily directed toward the adults who are out of harmony with Christ and his program and is strenuous effort to awaken them from the stupor of sin, to arouse their consciences, and bring them face to face with the realities of life.

One of the very serious handicaps under which the revivalist does his work is that those to whom he makes his appeal have acquired habits, modes of thought and living, and qualities of character that are contrary to the Christian way of life. Under the stirring appeal of the revivalist, these people are led to profess a faith in Christ as Saviour from sin, and under the emotional appeal in behalf of the better way of living, their hearts are set upon better things. But always there are the old habits and attitudes and associations that are rising up to defeat their purposes. Such persons are in need of help and guidance, and as soon as the revival has led them to a confession of Christ, educational evangelism should begin to provide a means whereby they may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The unfed convert soon becomes a backslider, and

the state of that man is worse than at first. The usual custom is to blame the revivalist, on the one hand, and charge the convert with being unstable on the other. Much of the trouble, however, lies in the fact that the Church has failed to provide for proper spiritual food and environment. Too often the new convert is turned loose at the close of the meeting and exhorted to go live for Christ, but the facts are that he knows so little about what it means to be a Christian that the old habits and methods of living often cause him to stumble and fall. As soon as the revival fires grow dim, and his emotions cool off, he is left to battle alone, and too often he gives up the struggle and goes back to his former life.

Every revival should be followed by an even stronger effort to enlist every convert in regular study and service so that they may have the opportunity to develop a character that is Christlike. Harold Begbee, a great Christian worker in the slums of London, says to one of his characters with whom he is pleading to get away from his old associates: "Conversion is a long, hard road, and one must rise from one's knees to trudge that long road."

Conversion begins when a man seeks and finds forgiveness, but conversion should continue until we all attain "unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The Sunday school offers the best opportunity for continuing the evangelistic appeal and influence that

will enable the convert to come to such a realization of his better self.

IS EDUCATIONAL EVANGELISM VITAL?

It seems almost foolish to ask this question, and yet it is so often asked that it needs to be answered. If by educational evangelism we mean only the imparting of certain knowledge or facts, or with the giving of intelligent assent to a creed or statement of faith, then the process could well be questioned on this point, but educational evangelism involves the whole of life and has to do with the development of right attitudes, right habits, right conduct, right relationships with God and fellow man, and the genuine experience of Jesus as Saviour. We must say that it is as vital as life itself.

The question may be answered with undisputable evidences. One can refer to his own association with many Christian characters who, as Horace Bushnell so beautifully expressed it, have grown from childhood to maturity as Christians and never known themselves to be otherwise. The fact is that it is the experience of most Christians that their religious life has been a gradual growth with here and there along the way certain high tides of emotional experience that have served as a means for pushing forward at a more rapid rate the process of religious development. If it is possible for one to grow in the Christian life, beginning at any age, is it not also possible to begin the growth of the Christian life with the dawn of consciousness? Yea, even more than that, is it not possible to grow in the Christian life from birth?

Another evidence in answer to this question is found in the fact that it is pretty generally accepted that of those who are received into the membership of the Protestant Church to-day fully eighty-five per cent of them are drawn in through the Sunday school, and nearly all of these are from Christian homes. Enumerate the long list of those who hold positions as pastors, as superintendents, as teachers, as presidents of the missionary societies, and it will be discovered that the overwhelming majority have grown up as Christians and have reached mature experience without a serious break in their relation to God and the Church.

Still another striking example is to be found among the Moravians, a people who are noted for their deep piety, strong Christian character, and deep devotion to Jesus Christ. It has been said of them that not one in ten can name the day when they began to be Christians. They grew from childhood with a warm, vital religious experience. This illustration is of great significance to people called Methodists, since it was in a Moravian prayer meeting that John Wesley came to his deep experience of the strangely warmed heart. This characteristic of religious experience has marked all of those who are followers of the founder of Methodism. In this connection, it is well to know that the Moravians followed the methods and principles of an educational evangelism.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has followed closely the Moravian idea and has set forth its belief in the soundness of these principles in her ritual of infant baptism. A close analysis of this ritual

will confirm with striking clearness all that is held to be true of educational evangelism. It recognizes that evil has come into the race, and that by heredity or otherwise the child has evil in his nature. Nevertheless it states clearly that the child is born into this world in Christ the Redeemer and with a heritage of eternal life. Jesus's own statement that to children belongs the kingdom of heaven is the foundation for this statement.

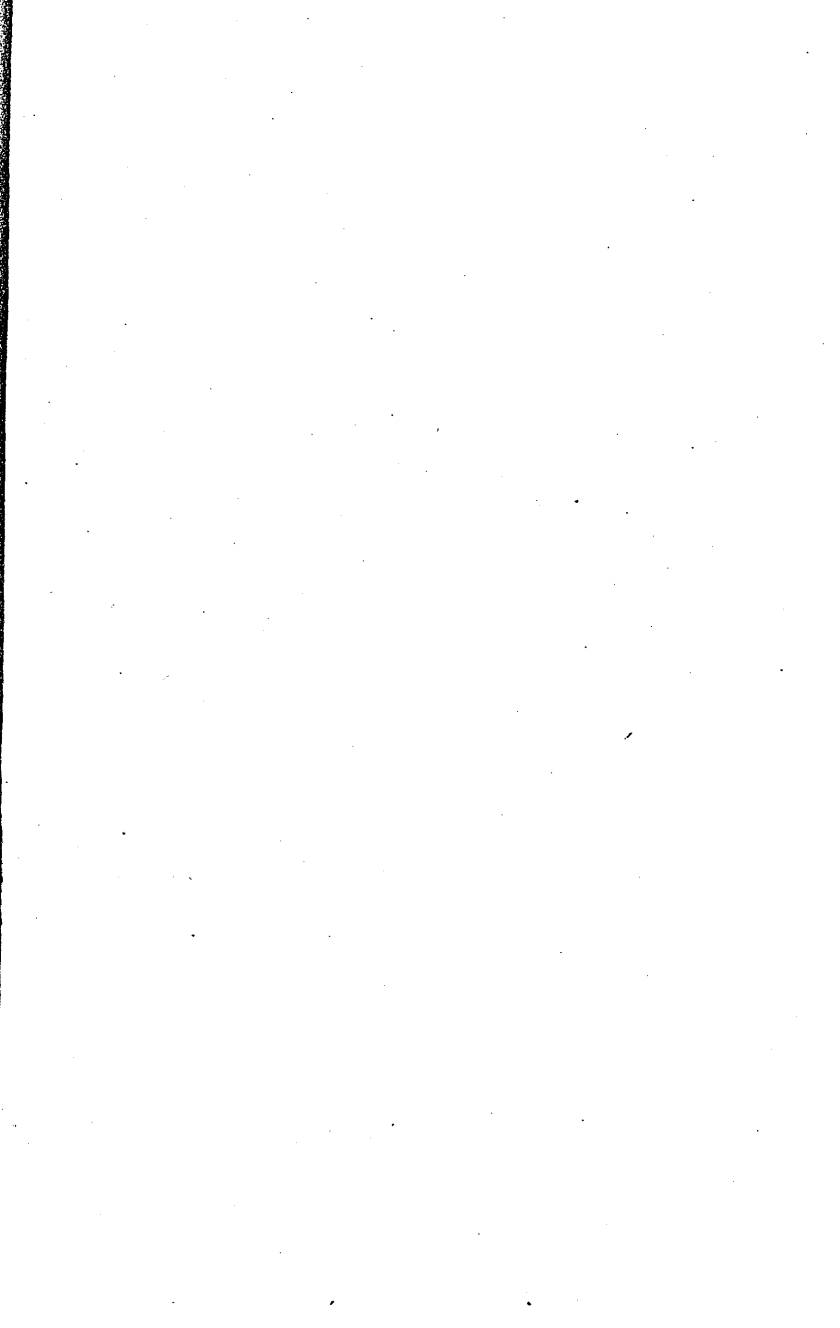
An heir is one who is already a member of a family, not one who is to become a member. In the petition, that is recited by the minister, a prayer is uttered that God will grant to the child to be baptized the continual replenishing of his grace so that the child may ever remain in the fellowship of God's Church, and in the prayer the minister prays that God will look upon the child, sanctify him by his Holy Spirit so that abiding safe in the ark of Christ's Holy Church he may safely pass through the troubles of the world. The prayer also asks that the Old Adam, or evil tendencies, may be banished from his life, and that the Christ life may be raised up, that carnal affections may die, and that the things of the spirit may live and grow.

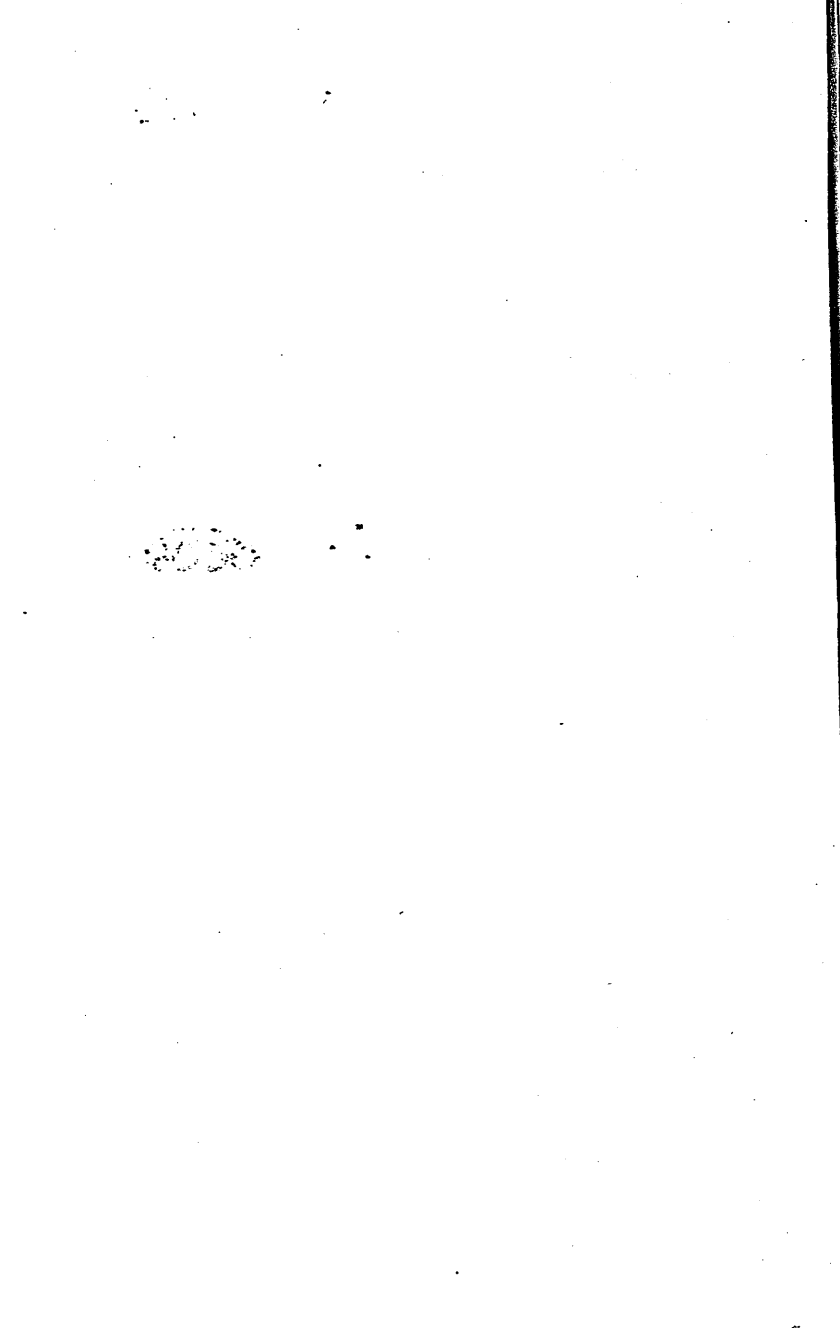
The task of educational evangelism is to help the growing child to overcome the evil and nurture the good. It is asked that he may be given power to choose between good and evil. In the pledge made at the altar by the parents, every principle that has been set forth in this text is recognized. They are urged to live before him in such a way as will set an example for him to follow. They are urged to train him in conduct,

to teach him the Scriptures, to help him form good habits, and, when he has come to that period of his life when he may intelligently choose for himself, to give him the opportunity to make the supreme choice.

This, then, is what we mean by educational evangelism, and the discussion of this subject in this book is to help the Sunday school officer and teacher to a fuller appreciation of the importance of his task and to help him more fully to realize his own responsibility.

"The personal factor is the biggest single element in evangelism. As the officer and teacher lives through the six days of the week, so will be the measure of his influence when he comes to the place and time of undertaking in a very real and intimate way to introduce his pupil to Jesus Christ. In seeking to bring the pupil into a personal fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, he is undertaking the largest task of which a human being is capable."





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